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Holding Companies

Mr. Roosevelt's brief announcement that he sees no reason for holding companies in any industry rests on the fact that in at least three areas they have proved a formidable obstacle to governmental regulation. In utilities, of course, it has been demonstrated that regulation of operating companies was in many respects futile as long as holding companies could buy up control and build speculative pyramids on this base. In railroads as well, the Van Sweringen and other ventures have shown how regulation could be circumvented, roads could be ruined and the investor cheated. Finally, the proliferation of holding companies is a fertile field for the avoidance of taxation. Mr. Wendell Willkie, in offering to sell to the government his holding company in the Tennessee Valley area, gave unwitting support to the theory that such a device is without legitimate function, at least in public utilities. His argument was that if local distribution companies and transmission lines were in public hands, the generating units still left to the parent company could not make a profit, since the local units would not pay enough for current. But the case really is that the holding companies have so overcapitalized their properties that reasonable rates for electricity, based on real costs, often will not validate the top-heavy security structures which have been built on the ownership of operating companies. Doubtless Mr. Willkie believes that a price fixed by such an arbitration board as he suggests, composed of one representative of government, one of the utilities and one appointed by the Supreme Court, would be more tender toward the owners of these dubious securities.

Mr. Reed to the Supreme Court

In making nominations to the Supreme Court, every President has a triple objective in mind. He wants the best man available—and best means, among other things, one who sees eye to eye with the President on public issues. He wants a man who will not too seriously upset the geographical balance of the Court and the proportions of Catholics, Protestants and Jews. Finally, he wants a man whom the Senate will confirm. Within these limits, the choice of Solicitor General Stanley Reed is an especially good one. Several liberal jurists might be named who probably outrank him in one respect or another—as is perhaps proved by the sighs of relieved admiration with which the conservative press greeted his name. He has worked hard and well defending the New Deal before the Court. His present outlook is much like Mr. Roosevelt's (though sometimes men change disconcertingly after being elevated to the highest bench). Progressivism now has a clear majority at all times; that is a fact of historic importance.

Behind the News in France

Nothing is more confusing and intricate than French politics; even the correspondents on the spot seem to be unable to agree in a coherent report of what is going on. It is certain, however, that whatever the interpretation of the recent political moves, an economic crisis plays a large part in the pressures on the government. Blum, as Premier of the People's Front, succeeded in obtaining reforms such as devaluation of the franc, the forty-hour week and higher wages, but he either did not or could not go on to take measures which would increase produc-

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tion, as he had intended to do by a large program of public works. In 1937 France produced only 71 percent of her output in 1929, while the budget was 40 percent larger. Prices and the cost of living have been rising, on account of higher costs and restricted production, while intermittent flights of capital menaced the franc again. Labor troubles resulted. Chautemps, who succeeded Blum, supported the determination of his Finance Minister, Bonnet, to avoid exchange control and maintain the tripartite monetary agreement with Britain and the United States while balancing the budget; but these measures in combination had a deflationary effect. The Communists and Socialists are still working in coöperation, but there is a tendency for the People's Front to split because of the determined opposition to exchange control by a part of the Radical Socialists, while those on the left of the coalition desire this as well as fundamental action for economic recovery. The left insists also upon more vigorous prosecution of the fight against the Cagoulards and other Fascist elements, and wants to aid the Loyalists in Spain. The problem of forming a new Cabinet, which is unresolved as we go to press, results from two circumstances—first, that the various elements of the People's Front do not agree upon these questions, second, that its popular majority is so overwhelming that it would be difficult to form a stable coalition of the center or right.

The Southern Senators Filibuster

From the day the third session of the Seventy-fifth Congress assembled on January 6, the Senate has spent nearly all its time on a filibuster, led by Senator Connally and Senator Bailey and conducted almost entirely by Southern Senators, against the Wagner-Van Nuys anti-lynching bill. This is a measure which holds the local public officials responsible for lynchings that occur within their jurisdiction. If it can be shown that they have failed to make every diligent effort to prevent the crime, they may be found guilty of a felony and fined a maximum of $5,000, or sentenced to prison for not more than five years, or both. In addition the bill provides that the county or state must compensate the injured person or, if the lynching results in death, his nearest relative, by a payment ranging from $2,000 to $10,000. The measure passed the House of Representatives last spring, but was held up in the Senate. During the special session last fall this same group of Senators, who are well aware that the bill will probably be passed if it is allowed to come to a vote, wasted precious time in filibustering against it. Even though legislation of vital importance is being delayed by their action, these Southern Senators are apparently still willing to block all other debate until they can be assured that the anti-lynching bill will not be passed. The administration is extremely anxious to obtain early action upon a number of measures that are either ready, or very nearly ready, to come before the Senate; such as the independent-offices-supply bill, the government-reorganization bill, the farm and housing measures. Whatever the merits of the anti-lynching bill may be (and certainly its object is admirable), the Southern Senators have no justification for standing in the way of the work the Senate must get done.

Ladling It Out to the Railroads

Extremely serious charges against the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Interstate Commerce Commission are contained in a statement by Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana, made public January 10. Senator Wheeler is chairman of the Committee on Interstate Commerce that has been examining the question of railroad finance. He reaffirms the charges made by The New Republic ("The Railroads Go on the Dole," January 12, and "Funny Business in the ICC," October 20). The charge, in essence, is that the RFC and the Finance Division of the ICC have worked together to make large government loans to railroads which were in fact in need of reorganization. The members of the Finance Division who have acted in these cases are B. H. Meyer and C. R. Porter, with Commissioner Carroll Miller also sitting. Charles Mahaffie, another member of the Finance Division, protested.

Such loans to roads in need of reorganization are prohibited by law and are obviously against sound public policy. They do not prevent subsequent bankruptcy and they make the plight of the investor all the worse, though they may "bail out" a few creditors. Loans were made to the St. Paul and the Chicago and Northwestern, for example, which then went into receivership. A loan was approved for the Erie when even the Chesapeake and Ohio, which controlled that railroad, refused to guarantee it.

Now the Baltimore and Ohio is in the process of getting $8,000,000 from the RFC. This loan is called one for "maintenance and equipment," which would be exempt from the provision that the road must be clearly solvent. Senator Wheeler charges that although the money will be used ostensibly to pay for past maintenance, the real requirement for which the road is borrowing is an interest payment of $4,000,000 due on February 1. He asserts that collateral offered both for former loans to the B. and O. and for this one, is worth less than the value of the loans—unless the stock market should suddenly leap ahead. If the facts are even half as bad as Senator Wheeler reports, it would appear that the RFC and ICC need a complete overhauling.

Japan's Impudent Trial Balloon

The New York Times reports that Japan is trying to borrow $50,000,000 from private interests in the United States. The debtor would also be a private corporation, at least nominally, having been created for the purpose of exploiting Manchukuo. It is explained that the government now feels its policy of "state socialism" in Manchukuo has been a failure, although it still intends to control finance, all communications, electric power, oil and gas. It

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is hard to know whether this suggestion is to be taken seriously. The Japanese are trying to drive a wedge between Great Britain and the United States, and the proposal to the Americans is accompanied by bitter words about Great Britain. Whatever its purpose, it should be decisively rejected. Publicly or privately, Japan is an extremely bad credit risk. Such a loan would be interpreted in Japan as American approval of her infamous course in China, despite the fact that no such approval exists. Legally, our State Department has no veto power over transactions of this sort; but actually, it can stop them and has done so in the past. If anyone is foolish enough to take Japan seriously, we hope he will be spoken to.

News Notes of a Week

A break in the commercial relations between Italy and the Soviet Union came when the latter ordered the suspension of all payments due to Italy. The order came after a dispute over the delivery of Soviet fuel oil to the Italian navy and the alleged failure of the Italian naval ministry to pay for the supplies it had received. . . . Diplomats of Italy, Austria and Hungary gathered for an exchange of views on international policy in the city of Budapest. The initiative behind the meeting was Mussolini's entirely. He sought to enlist the other two governments in the anti-Comintern pact, to persuade them to leave the League of Nations and to recognize the Insurgent forces in Spain. Mussolini was successful in only the last of his objectives, certainly the least important of the three. . . . Japan's Imperial Council, made up of the Cabinet, the Privy Council and the heads of the army and navy, met to decide the future course of their country's policy toward China and announced, in a guarded statement, that the "punitive operations" must go on. At the same time the Japanese press expressed extreme alarm over the announced participation by United States cruisers in the demonstration ceremonies over the opening of the British naval base at Singapore, scheduled for February 14. . . . In London representatives of Great Britain and the newly named State of Eire met in conference to attempt a settlement of the economic warfare that has existed between them. Observers feared that the old question of the separation of Ulster from the rest of Ireland might once more prove a serious obstacle to the reconciliation.

At home, President Roosevelt continued his series of meetings with industrial leaders, labor leaders and economic experts, trying to find their opinions on what can be done about the new depression. He called the top men in the automotive industry to a conference about the credit policies and production problems of their business. . . . The House Appropriations Committee recommended an expenditure of $553,266,000 for naval establishment during the coming year, a sum which was defended by Admiral William D. Leahy on the grounds of danger of war in Europe and the Far East.

Growing Pains of the CIO

IN THE last few weeks the CIO has been subjected to some rather bitter criticism, both from without and from within. In the first place, Mayor Hague of Jersey City has denied it ordinary civil liberties within his jurisdiction, on the basis of the charge that it is dominated by Communists. In this he merely repeats the lies of those reactionary interests who detest any successful and effective labor organization, as John P. Frey and other officials of the A. F. of L. have done before him. Then Benjamin Stolberg, in a series of articles in The New York World-Telegram, while pretending to be a friend of the CIO, deplored the factional quarrels in some of its unions, especially the United Automobile Workers, which he attributed to the activities of the Stalinists in following a party line of rule or ruin. Finally, and most important of all, President David Dubinsky of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, one of the largest and most successful bodies in the Committee, placed the responsibility upon it for failure to agree on reconciliation with the A. F. of L., and incidentally took a shot at criticism of himself in The Daily Worker, thus implying that Communists are influential in the CIO.

In spite of the different purposes of these three spokesmen, their utterances add up to a common result which may be damaging to the morale of the CIO. Mayor Hague is playing the game of a corrupt political machine which serves the interests of Jersey City employers who want to keep wages down and hours up. Benjamin Stolberg has nothing against labor organization or the CIO as such, but as a member of the Trotsky committee he has doubtless smarted under the attacks of defenders of Stalin, and wants to blame them for injury to progressive labor. David Dubinsky is principally concerned with healing the breach with the A. F. of L., and wants to put pressure on his fellow committee members to make more concessions in pursuit of that end. The net effect of the three attacks, however, is to give popular currency to the charge that the CIO is a stalking-horse for revolutionaries and disrupters, and to weaken the allegiance of many union members to their organization.

The facts are of course far less sensational than these much publicized comments would make them appear. The unions in the CIO, like the unions in the A. F. of L., are mass organizations containing men and women of every conceivable political persuasion, in about the same proportions as they exist in the communities from which their membership is drawn. Some of the most prominent CIO leaders are Catholics, others, like Mr. Lewis, are Protestants, still others, like Mr. Dubinsky himself, are Jews. There are in the organization some Republicans, a good many Democrats who are followers of President Roosevelt, some Progressives and Farmer-Laborites, and a mere sprinkling of Socialists, Communists, Trotskyites and Lovestoneites.

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So far as we know, no representative of any of the minor political faiths holds any position of major responsibility. Certainly their numbers (except in a few locals) are not large enough to carry elections.

Factional strife among the Communist and Socialist sectarians may indeed be bitter and tends at times to prejudice the larger issues. But even in the days when the official Communists were following a policy of opposing the regular unions and building new ones of their own, they were almost completely ineffectual. They did cause some trouble in the garment trades of New York, where their principal strength lay, and did actually control one union—the Fur Workers. But that was the extent of their power. Attacks on Communists in labor organizations, based on the supposition that they were a real menace either to society or to the unions themselves, could almost always be identified as uses of the red herring, for the simple reason that the Communists had little influence, whether for good or for evil. Since those days the party has changed its policy and has devoted its energies to helping build a strong and united labor movement. This has fortunately made the red-herring technique more difficult to employ. But in spite of devoted and often valuable work on the part of the members of the party, it is absurd to suppose that they wield great influence.

If disruptive tactics are being used, it would be much more reasonable to suspect the anti-Stalinist factions of using them, since these factions particularly attack the departure of the official Communists from an irreconcilable revolutionary position to that of the united front with merely reformist and democratic movements.

There are, of course, many real disagreements in the cohorts of labor—like that between the CIO and the A. F. of L., or the present breach between Mr. Dubinsky and Mr. Lewis. Such differences involve both personalities and policies, as all political quarrels do. No doubt they exist in the United Automobile Workers and other subordinate unions. But it is obviously silly to place the blame for them upon the Communist factions, however these factions may line up.

Pressure for unity between the A. F. of L. and the CIO is healthy, and we do not doubt that unity in the end will be achieved. Certainly Mr. Dubinsky is not the only member of the governing board of the CIO who feels its urgency. He has a right publicly to express his disagreement with the decisions it has made; no democratic institution can do without serious debates on policy. But we hope he will use the first possible occasion to dissociate himself from the inference that he is playing the game of Mr. Hague, or that of Mr. Stolberg. Witch-hunting has no place in the progressive labor movement; it can only harm the cause that all responsible labor leaders have at heart. If the impression once gets abroad that no labor organization can be tolerated if it includes a few members of unpopular political faiths, that of which Mr. Dubinsky is president would be one of the chief sufferers.

The Farmers Help Themselves

WITH THE amount of interest there is in the Scandinavian coöperatives it is surprising that more attention has not been paid to the parallel movement in the United States, the farmers' coöperatives for the buying and selling of farm supplies and produce. The size of the movement has been growing in this country since the 1860's, slowly at first, but with increasing rapidity until 1920, when the rate of increase leveled off. At present the number of coöperative associations is falling off slightly because of the tendency towards combination and centralization, but while the coöperatives are decreasing in number, their total membership and the total volume of their business are steadily increasing. Altogether there are about 10,500 cooperative selling or buying associations for farmers in this country with a total estimated membership of 3,660,000 and doing a business of approximately $1,840,000,000 a year.

Geographically the movement is centered in the twelve North Central states, which contain nearly 70 percent of the total number of associations. These groups do more than half of the entire national coöperative business. Minnesota, Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin and Missouri are the leading states measured in numbers of associations and in coöperative membership. Dairy products, grain, livestock, fruits and vegetables make up the bulk of the produce handled by the marketing agencies, which are three times as numerous as the purchasing coöperatives. Although they are comparatively few in number, it is the latter that are doing the most interesting work at the present time. The marketing agencies have grown up to meet the complicated problem the farmer has been forced to face of getting the product of his farm to distant markets, of making up car-load shipments of a uniform grade, of locating markets, stimulating demand and making sales. These are problems that are being solved by business men in all forms of industry and along very much the same lines that the coöperative marketing agencies have taken. The purchasing agencies, on the other hand, are adventuring into unexplored fields.

For example, the Coöperative Grange League Federation at Ithaca, New York, with a membership extending into New Jersey and northern Pennsylvania, by using informative labels, helps to bring nearer the day when these will be generally employed. The research staff of the GLF, together with the experts in the Cornell School of Agriculture, is continuously engaged in making studies of the various kinds of supplies required by the farmers in the particular area. By combining the knowledge gained from scientific research with the economy of large-scale purchasing, the GLF is able to supply its members with the best known materials at prices a great deal lower than they would otherwise be able to obtain. By "best," we mean the materials most economic for the specific locality;

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one source of farm waste is using materials too rich and expensive for the soil or climate.

This type of coöperative is, of course, a part of the consumers' coöperative movement as a whole, and an important part. It is being tried with the greatest success in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska and Minnesota, and the list of goods handled is constantly expanding. In addition to farm supplies proper (seed, fertilizer, farm machinery) the purchasing coöperatives are handling groceries, gasoline and lubricating oil. Several are helping the progress of rural electrification and have undertaken the coöperative buying of electrical appliances for the home. In the New York City area a large consumer-farmer cooperative has recently been formed to purchase milk from producers' coöperative associations in the northern part of the state and distribute it to consumers in the metropolitan areas at a cost substantially lower than the prices charged by the large private milk companies. Most of the associations of the consumer type are organized as wholesale concerns, distributing their wares through local retail coöperative stores. A good many, including the GLF, have retail outlets of their own, and distribute also through local retail stores which are not cooperatively organized.

The steady growth of farmers' coöperation in the United States is an extremely important factor in the general farm situation. It shows, for one thing, that the farmer can be organized, despite the contrary superstition, into a group devoted to the aid of both himself and his neighbor. It also shows that he is not willing to wait around helplessly until somebody decides it is time to come to his aid.

The Child Labor Amendment

AFTER nearly a decade in the doldrums the child-labor amendment has in the past few years had better sailing. Twenty-eight states (only eight less than the required number) can now be counted for its adoption, if we include twenty-three which rejected it soon after it was proposed by Congress in 1924 and which have more recently voted to ratify. But may a state, once having rejected, later ratify the amendment? The Supreme Court of Kansas and the Court of Appeals of Kentucky, dealing with resolutions of their respective legislatures, have reached opposite conclusions.

A state legislature, in voting on a proposed amendment, does not act under its law-making power derived from the state, but under a power given to it by the federal Constitution. Eminent writers on the Constitution have asserted that a legislature may ratify an amendment after having rejected it, but that ratification is final and cannot be withdrawn. Negative action, it is reasoned, is no action at all, whereas ratification is an exercise of the power given to the legislature and leaves it without power of further action.

This view was adopted by the Supreme Court of Kansas. To the Kentucky Court of Appeals it seemed "hardly consonant with common sense" that rejection is not, like ratification, definitive. A state, it insisted, can act but once and, whether its vote be for or against the amendment, "it has exhausted its power further to consider the question without a resubmission by Congress." Moreover, said the Kentucky court, the proposal of an amendment must be acted on within a reasonable time. The child-labor amendment was voted on by forty-two states by the end of 1927 and by only one state between that time and 1933. This was held to indicate "that general sentiment considered the proposition to be no longer before the people" in 1937.

The Constitution fixes no time limit for the adoption of amendments. But it is a "natural inference," the Supreme Court of the United States has said, that proposal and ratification "are not to be widely separated in time" and that ratification "must be sufficiently contemporaneous" in the states "to reflect the will of the people in all sections at relatively the same period." To this the Kansas court remarked, "The struggle over the child-labor problem is a part of the recent history of the United States." The amendment, it held, "retains its original vitality" and may still be ratified.

It is unlikely that the Supreme Court of the United States will entertain an appeal from either of these two decisions. The ratifying resolutions do not in themselves affect any interests and the Court has consistently refused to decide questions where no legal rights are involved. Not until Congress enacts legislation under the amendment—if that time comes—and that legislation finds its inevitable way to the Supreme Court, will the final word be spoken as to whether the Kansas or the Kentucky court is right, whether the amendment has become a part of the Constitution or the whole process of adoption must be started anew.

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Jackson Democrat

IN THE last month Mr. Robert Houghwout Jackson has risen above the political horizon with the effulgence of a harvest moon. He is chief spokesman of the New Deal in its counter-attack on the Sixty Families. He is the New Deal's choice for the governorship of New York in next fall's elections. He is among the half-dozen likeliest candidates for President in 1940.

The first thing to be said about him, however, is that he is no nine days' wonder. His present celebrity is no surprise to political observers in Washington. It is no surprise to the heads of the great corporations that, for five years, he has been suing in the name of the government. It would be an interesting exercise to calculate just how much has been spent by corporations on special counsel because it was known that Mr. Jackson would be the government prosecutor. It would be a tidy sum.

The briefest way to describe Mr. Jackson is to call him a durable justice-seeker—which is an uncommon type. The New Deal brought a great number of idealists to Washington, men and women of brains and ability. Their ideals grew to be more real to them than reality, and when—every so often—one of the splendid steeds of the New Deal chariot was found to be spavined or have a sponge up a fire-breathing nostril, they could not bear it. Many now work for corporations, nursing broken hearts.

A not infrequent basis for durability is pessimism. Mr. Jackson is not given to baring his soul; what he thinks of the human race, as a race, I do not know. But his public speeches and private conversation reveal unexpectedly skeptical turns. His main speech in his recent debate with Mr. Wendell L. Willkie in New York's Town Hall was a powerful, forthright defense of the New Deal against big business. But sandwiched in towards the end was a brief passage: "... There are dumb plays in government, matched by some in business. . . . I have seen politics interfere with administrative efficiency in government. I have also seen personal and family and banker politics do some pretty weird things in business. . . . In fact, I don't know which brand of wisdom I distrust the most, that of the theorists who have studied business but never run one, or that of the executives who have run business but never studied it."

He is a stout opponent of monopoly, but you will find he has never said that, in fact, it can be done away with in the present administration, or in any visible period of time. He is a passionate advocate of traditional American democracy, but he seems never really to have committed himself on whether it will make a viable form of social organization.

His mother's family, the Houghwouts (pronounced Howat), were northern New York Dutch, and he has the big, openwork face of her blood. His eyes are dark gray-blue, below heavy eyebrows. His characteristic feature is one of the best-defined widow's peaks ever bestowed on a male. He has powerful shoulders, a cavalryman's waist, and is of average height. He dresses well, in clothes of conservative, young-business-man cut. He has ready charm and wit, with the gift—not always common among justice-seekers—of sensing the grotesqueries of his own side as well as his opponents'. He is married and has two children, a boy and a girl. He is an Episcopalian and a Mason, and is forty-six.

As Assistant Attorney General, he has one of the vast, imperial offices in which the government houses its elect. For many New Deal executives, their offices are second homes, furnished with odd-shaped inkwells, knickknacks bestowed by admiring voters, and the debris from Mr. Sol Bloom's Sesquicentennial orgy. Mr. Roosevelt's desk, for example, is usually hidden by donkeys in gilt, silver, bronze and wood; of late a special little table beside it has held a collection of pottery pigs. Mr. Jackson's office is about sixty feet long, and contains a desk, dead-bare, a table, similarly bare, and three or four chairs. His office tells nothing; it is the room of a soldier encamped for the night.

It is a ticklish business to inquire into the sources of a man's personality. But one of the things that probably makes Mr. Jackson what he is, is his family. The Jacksons moved to Spring Creek, in the northwestern corner of Pennsylvania, in 1797. "Democratic clubs," to uphold the principles of the French Revolution, had been formed three years earlier, and the Jacksons were Democrats. Their fellow settlers were mostly Federalists. Since then, through 140 years, the Jacksons have kept the faith in a neighborhood solidly Republican. In the Civil War, they unflinchingly voted the party ticket.

To have a family that glories in belonging to a hopeless political minority is something no child could ignore. One of the several possible consequences would be to make the child contemptuous of what is elegantly called the climate of opinion. Mr. Jackson wore a fine, shiny Bryan button in the campaign of 1896, and remembers being proudly aware that it was different from the McKinley buttons worn by the other small boys and girls. In the campaign of 1908, when he was sixteen, he made a pro-Bryan speech at high school, his first—and for a long time his last—essay in politics.

A similar pressure fell on the boyhood days of Mr. Roosevelt, raised a Democrat in the coldly Republican air of Dutchess County, New York. But Mr. Roosevelt's father was a man of means; the Roosevelts lived on a good-sized estate, and young Franklin did not have to defend his family's political subversiveness as Mr. Jackson did. A much

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neater parallel—although whether it will please either man I do not know—is with Senator Borah, whose father was a Lincoln idolator in a preponderantly Democratic county of southern Illinois just after the Civil War. Mr. Borah is happy only when he is on the opposite side of whatever issue, and there is a little of this quality in Mr. Jackson. They happen to be the two most conspicuous spokesmen in Washington against monopoly—monopoly that makes it impossible for the odd man, the nonconformist, to exist. This may be an accident, but I do not believe it.

In his debate with Mr. Willkie a few days ago, Mr. Jackson made a very noble profession of faith:

> So long as the American spirit lives, and democracy survives, so that its spirit can be expressed in law, the American Congress will be trying to break down the concentration of power just as fast as the imperialists of business pile it up. We are a proud people, raised on the doctrines of equality found in the Declaration of Independence. We do not like to be bossed too much, not even by a boss whom we know we can change through the ballot box. We do not like to have any one man or corporation own the town. . . .

These were predicates about the American people the accuracy of which it would be hard to prove. But if for the American people you substitute Bob Jackson, you have an exact statement. He is a proud person, and no man or thing will boss him.

Mr. Jackson is now a prospective leader of the national Democratic Party, and it happens that his name is that of the party's saint. How conscious he is of this nominal identity I cannot say, but, for what it may be worth, I invite attention to the meticulous pains he took, in his recent Jackson Day speech in New York, to read Thomas Jefferson out of the party. ". . . Andrew Jackson was the first American political leader to seek his support among all the people, many then newly franchised through abolition of property qualifications for voting. . . ." And: ". . . Jefferson was sure only of a democracy of independent farmers. He was not sure that poor people of great cities . . . had the character or idealism to take their places beside the farmer in making democracy work. He was actually afraid they might destroy democracy."

The current Mr. Jackson, like the original, is a farm boy. He took his law at the Albany Law School, and set up in practice at Jamestown, New York. He had labor unions and sizable corporations among his first clients. Characteristically he says about those days: "I tried to keep my practice varied. I didn't want to be dependent on any one source for my income." He seems quickly to have become top lawyer of Jamestown and a figure in the local and state bar associations. He was made general counsel and vice-president of the local street railway, general counsel and director of the telephone company. After the 1929 crash, he arranged for the consolidation of the city's three banks, and became director of the new institution.

A pair of widely syndicated columnists have tried to puff up this small-city career to a point where Mr. Jackson appears as a renegade big-business man. He becomes the owner of a country estate, a sportsman, a breeder of race horses. The estate, Mr. Jackson says, is a lakeside farm near Jamestown, but he cheerfully admits to the horses. His father kept horses on the farm where he was born, and now and again one of them turned out to be a mighty fast trotter, and was entered at the county fair. The younger Jackson once had two trotters of his own and now keeps two saddle horses in Washington.

His reputation made in Jamestown brought him, early in the New Deal, to the Internal Revenue Bureau as its general counsel. In the Bureau's records he observed the financial anatomy of big business, and seems to have been inordinately shocked. In speaking of the financial dealings of the government and big business under the preceding Republican regimes, he has the tight-lipped grimness of veterans telling of the Argonne forest. When he had found his bearings, he brought suit against the most powerful adversary in sight, the late Andrew W. Mellon. Thereupon began a heart-breaking education in the problem of applying governmental sanctions to concentrated wealth. In part, the case hung on whether Mr. Mellon's regal art collection was a bona-fide public trust. Just as Mr. Jackson seemed to be winning, Mr. Mellon offered the collection, together with money for a vast museum building, to the federal government. As far as newspaper readers were concerned, Mr. Jackson's case was destroyed. But as a result of his efforts, the government will still collect about $750,000.

Before the Mellon case was decided, Mr. Jackson was jumped to the SEC, as the New Deal's best man to enforce the holding-company law of 1935. He prepared and opened the great Electric Bond and Share case. Again he was given an education in the ways of big business such as few men get.

Two years ago, he was made head of the anti-trust division of the Department of Justice. There he has instituted the case against the Mellon-controlled Aluminum Company of America, the case now being tried at Madison, Wisconsin, against the principal oil companies, and the case against the finance affiliates of the Big Three of automobiles. He has revolutionized anti-trust procedure. Previously the anti-trust division acted chiefly on complaints from business men, and complaints came only when two corporations were fighting between themselves. One or another company would try to use the government as a threat against its rival. Very often, before suit could be begun, the two concerns would reach an understanding, and the complaining company would repudiate the evidence on which the government had built its case. Mr. Jackson has ended this. The modest resources of the anti-trust division are directed not against corporations causing grief to other big businesses, but against those bringing grief to the public.

He has also been one of the New Deal's most

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effective witnesses before Congress. Unlike some other New Dealers—it would be easy to name names—his glandular system works best with a hostile committee majority before him. He was the administration's chief witness for the "soak-the-rich" taxes of 1935, and on behalf of the Supreme Court reorganization bill last year. Opposing the conservatives' plan for a constitutional amendment, he snapped out: "Judges who resort to a tortured construction of the Constitution may torture an amendment. You cannot amend a state of mind."

Just now he is primarily concerned to bring about a full-dress investigation of monopoly by Congress. That he is asking merely for an investigation, instead of definite legislation, helps explain his quality of durability. He can hardly hope that an investigation will reveal anything he and all competent students have not known for a long time. But an investigation is the sound, traditional way of building up support among the voters. There have been other New Dealers who have felt that because a course of action was just, intelligent and necessary, the voters must inevitably favor it. Mr. Jackson retains a small corner of pessimism. An old horseman, he expects winged horses to pull a tendon. Because he is durable above other justice-seekers, he is perhaps the New Deal's chief hope.

Washington. JONATHAN MITCHELL.

Memorandum on National Policy

PRESIDENT Roosevelt is now asking Congress to authorize another large increase in our navy. To a sum that is already in the neighborhood of $600,000,000 annually, we shall be asked to add perhaps $200,000,000 more. The combined expenditures for the army and navy, not counting anything spent because of past wars, are already well in excess of $1,000,000,000 a year (the official figures usually quoted are misleading by a few millions, making the sum seem smaller than it is). If the President gets his way, we shall soon be spending close to a billion and a half a year for the purpose of military defense. It is commonly called "national defense," but the term I use is obviously far more accurate. National defense depends upon many additional factors—the degree of industrialization, the geographic position of the country in relation to possible enemies, the health and morale of the people and the efficient functioning of the economic system.

The President's proposed increase in naval expenditures comes after a series of previous increases from year to year. Nineteen thirty-four represented a jump of $150,000,000 over 1933. The next year we added another $200,000,000, and in 1936, $50,000,000 more. The total addition in four years amounted to about three-quarters of the earlier figure. Military costs were going up at the same time, increasing from $243,000,000 to $393,000,000. (All these figures are probably somewhat lower than the actual ones.) When the naval-limitation treaties expired a year ago, we had seventeen great battleships, six airplane carriers, forty cruisers, large and small, two hundred and forty-five destroyers and ninety-seven submarines—four hundred and five vessels with an aggregate tonnage of a million and a half. Great Britain had a navy about 100,000 tons larger than ours and with rather more new ships. Japan's force was slightly more than half the size of either the British or American, and was followed at intervals of 100,000 tons or more by France, Italy, Germany and Soviet Russia.

Why does the President ask for more ships when our burden is already so great? The answer is clear: in order to have enough military strength to make us safe. The whole world, as everyone knows, is engaged in a mad building race. Great Britain, in particular, is spending $7,000,000,000 in the immediate future on ships, guns and airplanes. The President feels that our safety from attack requires that we shall keep up.

But does it?

It is a striking fact that no official of the United States government, in any department, ever talks about our military establishment in terms of our national policy. That is, no one ever talks any sense on the subject. Everyone says that the navy is to defend us, and to keep us out of war. But if this is true, then a hideous mistake has apparently been made, lasting over many years. From the testimony of Major General Johnson Hagood, late Commanding General of the Third Army and the Eighth Corps Area, and other experts, the inference is plain that the kind of army and navy that we possess is *not* intended to defend this country. If we really wanted to protect our shores, and nothing else, we should do many things that we are not now doing. And we should omit some things in which we are now engaged. Our navy parallels that of Great Britain with almost comical exactness. She is a worldwide empire, whose fleet is intended for worldwide operations. And so is ours.

If we wanted to defend the United States, plus Alaska, Hawaii, the Panama Canal and our Caribbean possessions, what should we do that we are not now doing? In the opinion of these experts, we should spend a substantial sum of money on coast defense, which, in the United States, has been allowed to sink to a scandalously low level. We should devote a great deal of attention to the use of airplanes in conjunction with fixed-gun defense

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of our principal harbors, many of which are virtually unguarded today. We should supplement these efforts with plans for mine laying and the use of submarines in our coastal waters. We should reduce our fleet to the number and size of vessels necessary to participate in these defensive measures. This would almost certainly mean a reduction in our present number of battleships and big cruisers, types of vessels which are primarily designed to conduct an offensive over long distances. We should in addition have a small and highly mobile mechanized army to fight at home if required. We would need to pay very little attention to transport, since it would be outside our policy to try to carry millions of men across an ocean. We should therefore be able to reduce the vast annual sums that we are now spending in merchant-marine subsidies, and the even vaster sum which the lively Mr. Kennedy proposes to spend.

If we had a military establishment intended for defense, how serious would be the threat that we could ever be successfully invaded and attacked by any foreign foe? Very small, in the opinion of competent authorities. Any successful invasion of the United States must be on a great scale; a small expeditionary force would in all likelihood be wiped out. There is a popular delusion about the ease with which large numbers of troops can be transported across the ocean and landed on hostile shores. In the Great War, with the fleets of all the Allies, and our own, to aid us, when we were menaced only by a comparatively few enemy submarines, and debarked our men in friendly France, we never carried more than 300,000 troops in any one month. An invading army, under modern conditions, needs enormous quantities of supplies, and these, also, would have to be sent by water.

The late Mr. Arthur Brisbane made one impression on American thinking, if no other. He frightened millions of people about the danger of bombing airplanes from Europe or Asia. I am aware of no competent military authority, however, who supports his view. No bombing plane of the present or visible future could fly non-stop across the Pacific or two-thirds of it. No bomber could fly across the Atlantic and return. The military danger from airplane carriers which would approach our shores and then launch bombers is described, on good authority, as negligible. Neither Canada nor Mexico represents any military menace to this country. Neither one could be used successfully by an Asiatic or European power as a basis for operations against the United States unless our coast-defense fleet had been destroyed.

Moreover, the power of the bombing airplane as an offensive weapon under all conditions and types of terrain has in the past been greatly exaggerated. As Spain has proved, it is useful in combination with infantry both as offensive and defensive tactics. As a means of breaking civilian morale and ending a war promptly by destroying great cities and all their inhabitants, the airplane is far from fulfilling the predictions of the alarmists.

In any case, however, this discussion is a little beside the point. We do not make our great cities any safer from attack by building a huge fleet and then sending it halfway around the world, as Secretary Hull apparently wants to do, in the interest of law and order and the maintenance of treaty obligations. As long as our coast defenses are neglected, as such military experts as General Hagood declare them to be, a vast fleet of 35,000-ton battleships and 10,000-ton cruisers, operating at a great distance from our shores, might easily leave us in an extremely perilous condition. No fleet, no matter how large, can be guaranteed invincible, especially with new inventions in offensive warfare coming along as rapidly as they have done lately.

I submit that the foreign policy of President Roosevelt and Secretary Hull, as demonstrated in their actions rather than their words, is in clear opposition to the will of the great majority of the American people at this moment. The President and the Secretary of State insist on keeping our troops in China, in the midst of a major war, not merely because Americans have property in China, but also because they propose to protest the illegality of the present conflict. If this attitude results in drawing the United States into war, no doubt both these gentlemen will sincerely regret it.

But the American people as a whole do not want war. They fear having our soldiers sent to fight overseas. In so far as they fear anything else, it is military invasion. In spite of this, we continue in a policy which is aimed primarily not at defending our own shores but at being able to fight whenever Britain fights, and in the same way. I do not believe that this policy has been very carefully thought out by anyone. I think we have drifted into it partly because it accords with the imperialistic notions popular at the turn of the century, partly because admirals like battleships, which maximate their egos, partly because President Roosevelt is a lover of ships who was brought up among blue uniforms and gold braid. I suggest that on the whole, the navy has heretofore made the foreign policy. I suggest that it is high time the policy made the navy. It is possible that General Hagood, and those who think like him, are wrong. We cannot find out without full and free public discussion such as Washington has thus far prevented. Representative Boileau of Wisconsin has introduced a bill defining the military policy of the United States as defense of this country, Alaska, Hawaii, the Panama Canal and our Caribbean possessions. For three successive years, the brass hats of Washington have refused to let this measure come out of committee so that it could be discussed in the light of day.

This is the more surprising because Representative Boileau's bill, if its intentions were carried out, could not logically be opposed by any believer in "collective security" on the ground that it favored "isolation." Such a measure would not prevent the United States from participating in embargoes or

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boycotts of an aggressor, if the country wanted to do such a thing (as it pretty clearly does not). If the assurances of the proponents of collective security are to be taken at face value, they do not suggest that the United States ought to go to war in support of that principle.

If the Boileau principle were adopted we should, as a matter of fact, be in a far better position to participate in a moral crusade than we are now. As long as we continue to build big battleships and send them to places like China, we shall always be under the suspicion of not coming into court with clean hands, of being concerned more for our own pocketbooks than for international morality. The generals, the admirals and the State Department experts are authorities on gun caliber, armor plate and protocol, but when it comes to laying down the wise policy for America to pursue, they are just as ignorant, just as incompetent, as you or I or anyone else. They ought not to be allowed to make our policy in this supremely important matter, and certainly they should not make it by default, in the absence of any sort of national debate.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

The Bronze Horseman

IN ATTEMPTING a new translation of A. S. Pushkin's great poem, "The Bronze Horseman," it may be useful to make a few explanations.

The poem deals with the tragic contradiction between the right to peace and happiness of the ordinary man and the right to constructive domination of the state. (The Bronze Horseman, which symbolizes the latter, is Falconet's well known statue of Peter the Great, which has figured in several Soviet films.) What is present to the minds of Russian readers but what may not be equally familiar to foreign ones is the background of the history of St. Petersburg. St. Petersburg was built by Peter the Great—the "He" of the first part of the poem—at the beginning of the eighteenth century on the swampy shores and islands of the Neva. The difficulties involved in this feat were prodigious, and neither then nor from the point of view of the future did Peter stint himself in the expenditure of human life. Of the artisans whom Peter compelled to come north to lay the foundations of the city, thousands died of hardship and disease; and the city, in its unnatural location, was at the mercy of terrible floods caused by the breaking-up of the ice of Lake Ladoga just east of it or—as on the occasion described in the poem—by the west wind blowing back the Neva. There had been one such flood in 1777, and there was another in 1824; and they continued after Pushkin's time.

Pushkin contributed anonymously to the victims of 1824, and it is with this disaster that "The Bronze Horseman" deals. But the poem was not written until 1833. The poet, who had spent seven of the best years of his youth in exile and under surveillance as a result of his revolutionary verses and who, finally allowed to return to St. Petersburg, was still obliged to submit all his writings and movements to the obstructive control of the Tsar, knew well what it was to have one's life in the hands of a ruthless authority. And he had recently married a young wife who was bringing him into the circle of the Court, where the obligations imposed by the Tsar were weighing on him more heavily than ever and where the attentions of the Tsar to his wife are supposed to have been one of the factors in the series of events which drove Pushkin scarcely more than three years later to his fatal final duel.

In "The Bronze Horseman," as in "Evgeni Onegin," we can see very clearly the process by which the creations which Pushkin in the beginning has identified more or less with himself, become detached from the author, turn into sharply outlined characters and dramatize the impulse which engendered them in a purely objective way. The original intention of Pushkin had been to continue "Evgeni Onegin." In this sequel Evgeni was to have played some role in connection with the Decembrist revolt of 1825, in consequence of which so many of Pushkin's friends had been executed or sent to Siberia. He wrote this tenth canto in cipher and then, still afraid that it might get him into trouble, burned most of the manuscript. Then he embarked on an entirely new poem in the same stanza-form as "Evgeni Onegin" and with a hero whose first name was still Evgeni, but whose family name was different and who was in fact a quite different person. The new Evgeni is the descendant of an illustrious old boyar family—Pushkin begins with a long genealogy—whose possessions and credit have terribly dwindled. Evgeni himself is a clerk; and Pushkin in his original draft conducted a long argument with imaginary opponents over his right to choose so humble a personage, in defiance of the romantic fashion, as the hero of a narrative poem. The situation of the new Evgeni was a caricature of Pushkin's own. He himself was the descendant of boyars—the early Pushkins had been among the electors of the first Romanov—and now he found himself a socially insignificant person in a *haut monde* where neither his ancient blood nor his genius as a poet was much respected. He had been put under a terrible strain since his marriage to keep up his establishment from his literary earnings.

And, as Pushkin begins to develop his real theme, the new Evgeni evolves entirely out of the "Evgeni

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Onegin" frame. Pushkin drops the genealogy, the *vers de société* stanza-form, the amusing man-of-the-world digressions. He drops the imaginary argument, of which he has apparently gotten the better. The former family glories of the hero, which we are told he spends no time regretting, are alluded to in half a dozen lines; and Pushkin indicates in two words that Evgeni avoids association with the nobility. The life of the upper-class St. Petersburg figures only in an introduction in which Pushkin describes its pleasures in his own conventional character; and his deeper feelings have obviously been canalized in the character of the unfortunate desk-worker who hopes to own two chairs and a table. Indeed, Pushkin has used already in regard to himself in one of the rejected parts of "Evgeni Onegin" exactly the same phrases about wanting only to be master in his own house with a pot of cabbage soup, which he now assigns to the second Evgeni. At the beginning of "Evgeni Onegin," we see Evgeni, the Petersburg dandy, going to bed after a night of gayety just as the common people of the city are getting up and going about their tasks. The new Evgeni is now one of these ordinary people: Pushkin has dropped even the literary avocations which he gave him in his original version. And Pushkin has made out of Evgeni's collision with the power and pride of St. Petersburg a poem which has been put by Russian critics beside the longer masterpiece that preceded it—which has indeed been described by D. S. Mirsky as probably the greatest Russian poem ever written.

It would be impossible to reproduce in English the peculiar poetic merits of "The Bronze Horseman." The terseness and compactness of Pushkin's style, which constitute one of the chief difficulties of translating him, in this poem reach a point where, as Mirsky says, "the words and their combinations" are "charged to breaking-point with all the weight of meaning they can bear." The two terrific themes of violence: the oppressive power of the city, made solid in stone and metal, the liquid force and fury of the flood, are embodied in language of a density and energy which are hardly to be found in English poetry outside the first books of "Paradise Lost":

> He scarce had finisht, when such murmur fill'd
> Th' assembly, as when hollow rocks retain
> The sound of blust'ring winds, which all night long
> Had rous'd the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
> Sea-faring men o'er-watcht. . . .

Or,

> Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death.

Yet I believe it is worth while to make an attempt to present "The Bronze Horseman" in English. There has, so far as I know, been only one English translation—that of Professor Oliver Elton, included by Mr. Yarmolinsky in his "Poems, Prose and Plays of Pushkin." This translation is a very respectable performance: it has certain merits which mine cannot pretend to. Professor Elton, following Pushkin's rhymed verse, has been able to succeed far better than I in catching the tumult and movement of the poem, and he has occasionally struck off a fine Pushkinian line; but he has blurred the effect of the whole by diluting it with a kind of stock romantic verbiage.

I have tried the experiment of translating the poem into prose with an iambic base. This at least makes it possible to avoid the woolliness which is the bane of translations of Pushkin—who is the least woolly of poets—since one is not obliged to pad out the spare and rapid phrases of the original with half-a-dozen words or more for every two of the text and with adjectives and images which are not Pushkin's. (I have used a different text from Professor Elton's: that of P. E. Shchegolev.)

But the main point is that "The Bronze Horseman" is certainly one of the most enlightening things ever written about Russia by a Russian. It is not only in the portrayal of chaos, the resounding accents of power, that Pushkin is comparable to Milton. Pushkin's poor clerk Evgeni, too, is defying Eternal Order. But his defiance no longer appears under the aspect of a theological struggle; it is the great theme of the nineteenth century: the struggle of the individual with society—the theme of which, in terms of the bourgeois world, the great artistic presentation is in Ibsen. But Pushkin had dramatized it in terms of a society partly modernized and yet basically and belatedly feudal. Evgeni has lost his position as a gentleman through the incompetence of his father as a landlord (this appears from the genealogical fragment which Pushkin broke off and published separately), but he has not become a middle-class man. He is the pettiest of *petits bourgeois;* with his two chairs and his pot of cabbage-soup, he is practically a proletarian. The distance between him and the Statue, and what the Statue represents, is immense. He will be crushed, and his curse will never be heard—or rather, it would never have been heard if it had not been transmitted by Pushkin, whose poet's vocation it was to hear and to give a voice to the voiceless.

The Tsar was to do his best to prevent it from being heard: "The Bronze Horseman" was suppressed by the censorship and not published till after Pushkin's death. And one wonders, in reading it today, what repercussions it may have in Soviet Russia. After all, the construction of the White Sea canal has been accomplished by forced labor not much different from the forced labor with which Peter the Great built St. Petersburg; and, after all, Peter the Great is the figure to whom the laureates of Stalin most willingly compare him and to whom he is said to be most willing to be compared. The dissident and the irreverent, like Evgeni, hear behind them a horseman, not of bronze but of steel, and no matter where they go, they cannot escape him; he drives them into the prisons of the GPU just as surely as he drove Evgeni into the Gulf of Finland; and just as Evgeni took off his hat and

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slunk aside where he had formerly hissed his threat, so the guilt of simple opposition puts them ultimately at the mercy of the "Idol" and compels them to confess to crimes which they have unquestionably never committed. Between the power that builds the State and the Idol that represents it, on the one hand, and the ordinary man, on the other, the distance is still very great.

Not of course that Soviet Russia is not an improvement over Tsarist Russia. The gains of the Revolution and the potentialities for the future of its program should be no more destructible by the policies of however narrow and harsh an administration than the gains of the American Revolution and the potentialities of our republic were destroyed by Harding and Hoover. And not, on the other hand, that government of any sort, whether tsarist or capitalist or socialist, will not give rise to the same kind of conflict between the individual and the corporate interest which Pushkin represents in this poem. But it is well to remember nowadays that the attempt to establish socialism in Russia has had to be carried out in a society conditioned by despotism.

It is also well to remember that Pushkin makes Evgeni's defiance take place in Senate Square, the scene of the Decembrist revolt, which occurred the year after the flood; and that, however discouraged the poet may have been by the suppression of the revolt and by his own eclipse, that defiance was ultimately made good—in November, 1917.

The Bronze Horseman

A Petersburg Tale[1]

Beside the desolate waves stood *He,* and, thronged with mighty thoughts, stared out. Before him, broad, the river rushed along; a poor skiff plied upon it, solitary. Along the mossy marshy bank, the cabins, here and there, showed black, roofs for the wretched Finn; and forests, never brightened by the mist-enshrouded sun, were roaring all around.

Thought *He:* "We shall from hence strike terror to the Swede. Here shall a town be reared to that arrogant neighbor's woe. Here, for our greatness, Nature has ordained that we shall break a window through to Europe; shall stand with foot set firm beside the sea. Hither, by waters they have never known, all flags shall come to be our guests, and we shall glory in our scope."

A hundred years went by, and that young city, of northern lands the beauty and the marvel, from dark of forests, damp of bogs, rose up in all its grandeur and its pride; where once the Finnish fisher, Nature's sullen step-child, had all alone beside low-lying shores let down his ragged nets, today by bustling docks, crowd, strong and shapely, bulks of tower and palace; ships swarm from all earth's ends to that rich port; Neva has clothed herself in stone; bridges have spanned her waters; her isles with groves dark-green are covered over; and now before the younger capital, old Moscow dims—as, before the new Tsarina, the widow of the purple.

I love thee, masterpiece of Peter—I love thine aspect, graceful and severe, Neva's mighty stream, her granite banks, stiff lace of iron gratings, the limpid dusk and moonless radiance of nights so full of thought, when, lampless, in my room I write and read, and sleeping masses of deserted streets show clear, and the Admiralty's needle gleams, and, never suffering the shade of night to dim the golden sky, one glow makes haste to take the other's place, gives night but half an hour. I love thy cruel winters, the frost and moveless air, the racing of the sleighs beside broad Neva, the girls with faces brighter bit than roses, the balls with all their glitter, stir and chatter, and bachelor feasts, with fizz of foaming goblets and azure flame of punch. I love the warlike liveliness of playing-fields of Mars, monotonous beauty of the Horse and Foot in ranks that sway in rhythm, streaming triumphant banners, the glisten of their bronze war-riddled helmets. I love, O martial capital, thy fort's loud smoke and thunder, when the Empress of the North gives the Imperial house a son, or Russia greets, exulting, her foeman's fresh defeat, or Neva, breaking through the dark blue ice, forth sweeps it to the sea and, smelling spring days, rejoices.

Be splendid, Peter's City, and stand, like Russia, strong—for lo, the very conquered element has made her peace with thee at last; their ancient hate and bondage may the Finnish waves forget nor vex with impotent anger Peter's eternal sleep!

A dreadful time there *was*—of that I tell. And may my story, friends, be but, for you, a grisly fireside tale, no legend of bad omen. . . .

I

On Petrograd, all clouded over, November breathed the autumn cold. Splashing with loud waves against her handsome banks, Neva threshed about, a sick man on his restless bed. The hour was late and dark; angry, the rain against the window beat, the dolorous wind drove howling. That evening from the house of friends returned the young Evgeni. We shall call our hero so: the name rings nicely; my pen is friendly to it from of old. No need to give his surname—though in former times it may have shone, and sounded from the pen of Karamzin among our country's annals; today the world of gossip has forgot it. Our hero lodges in a little room. He works somewhere or other, shuns the gentry, pines after neither his departed relatives nor old days now forgotten.

And so, come home, he shook his overcoat,

[1] The incident described in this tale is based on fact. The details are taken from contemporary magazines. The curious may verify them from the material compiled by V. I. Berkh.—Foreword by Pushkin.

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undressed and went to bed, but long he could not sleep, disturbed by divers thoughts. What thoughts? That he was poor; that he had to work for decent independence; that God might make him cleverer and richer; that there were certain lucky idle fellows, who loafed and took no thought and found life light enough!; that he must wait two years perhaps to get promotion; that the river was all bloated, that the weather got no better; that the bridges might perhaps be taken up, and that in that case his Parasha would surely miss him. . . . Here he was filled with ardent tenderness, his fancy, like a poet's, soared away.

Get married? Well, why not? Why not, indeed? "I shall make myself a modest little corner and there I shall give Parasha peace. A bed, two chairs, a pot of cabbage-soup, and I the master of the house. . . . What more should I want? We shall coddle no caprices; I shall take Parasha out for country walks on summer Sundays; humble I'll be and sly: they'll give me a snug berth; Parasha will keep house, bring up the children. . . . And so we'll live and so go down to death, still hand in hand, and be buried by our grandsons. . . ."

So he mused. And yet that night he was melancholy, and he wished that the wind would not sound so dreary, that the rain would not sound so angry, as it beat against the pane.

Sleepy, he closed his eyes at last. And lo! the dark of that foul night is thinning and pale day is at hand. . . . Ah, dreadful day!

All night had Neva plunged against the storm to reach the sea, but, worsted by that fury, she now could fight no more. . . . At morning to her shores the people flocked in crowds, in wonder at the spray, the mountainous swell, the foam of raging waters. But Neva, by the Gulf winds' driving taxed now beyond her force, fell back in rage and tumult; flooded the islands; fiercer and fiercer grew; reared up and roared; like a cauldron, boiled, breathed steam; and, frenzied, fell at last upon the town. All fled before her—all was left deserted—and now the waves were breaking through the streets, and now invading basements; Neva's canals were all one sea with her, and like a Triton, Petropol emerged, waist-deep in water.

A siege! A storming! Waves, like savage beasts, climb to the windows. Boats, pell-mell borne along, strike glass with sterns. Bridges swept loose by the deluge, fragments of cabins, timbers, roofs, the thrifty merchant's wares, the wretched chattels of the poor, the wheels of city droshkies, the coffins from the graveyard washed afloat—all these drift through the town!

The people see the wrath of God and wait their execution. Alas! all ruined: roof and food! Where will it end?

The late Tsar in that terrible year still gloriously ruled Russia. Distressed and baffled now, he sought the balcony and spoke: "To Tsars it is not given to curb the elements, for they belong to God." With mournful brooding eyes, he watched the dreadful work. The public squares were lakes, and into them the streets were pouring rivers. The palace seemed a dismal isle. The Tsar's command went forth: his generals, far and wide, through stormy waters on a perilous course, plunged through the streets and sought to save the people, gone mad with panic, drowning in their houses.

Now at this time in Peter's Square, where a new corner-house had risen, where on the perron high, lifelike with lifted paw, two ornamental lions stand—astride one marble beast, hatless, with arms tight folded, rigid and deathly pale, Evgeni perched. Not for himself, poor fellow, did he fear. He did not notice how the greedy billows rose till they lapped his soles nor how his face was dashed with rain nor how the wildly howling wind had suddenly snatched his hat. His eyes were fixed far out in one strained desperate stare. *There* reared and raged the waves, like mountains, from the outraged deep; *there* raved the storm, *there* broken things were tossed. . . . And *there*—God! God!—alas! within the billows' reach, by the Gulf's very brink—the paintless fence, the willow, the little flimsy house—and they, the widow and her daughter, *there*—his dear Parasha, all his hope. . . . Or is it all a dream that he beholds? Or is our life, then, nothingness—as empty as a dream, Fate's mockery of man? As if bewitched, fast rooted to the marble, he can't dismount! About him stretches water—water now and nothing more. And, back turned toward him, steady on its height above defiant Neva, rears on its steed of bronze, with outstretched arm, the idol.

II

But now, with ruin sated, with insolent uproar spent, Neva crept back, well pleased to have wreaked her fury and heedlessly abandoning her booty. So with his villainous band invading town, the ruffian breaks in, wrecks, ransacks, cuts throats: cries, grindings, violence, oaths, alarms and howls! . . . And, burdened with their plunder, fearing pursuit and tired, the robbers hurry home and drop their loot along the road.

The water sank, the pavements cleared again, and my Evgeni hastes with fainting spirit, hoping, fearing, yearning, to the river scarce grown tame. But, still exulting fiercely in the fullness of their triumph, still wickedly the waters boil; still does the foam o'erspread them, and like a warhorse running from a battle, heavily Neva breathes. Evgeni looks: he sees a boat, a godsend; he runs, calls out to the boatman—he, careless of danger, is ready enough to take him across the terrible waters for ten kopecks.

And long the practised oarsman strives with the tossing waves, and momently the skiff with its rash sailors seems like to plumb the abyss between their ranks—and now at last it makes the land.

The poor wretch runs along the familiar street to find the familiar place. He looks—oh, dreadful sight!—he knows it not. All lies a heap before him;

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part tumbled down, part swept away; some of the little houses knocked awry, some quite destroyed, some shifted by the waves—and all about, as on a field of battle, bodies were strewn. Evgeni rushes headlong—uncomprehending, faint with horror—where Fate awaits him with the unseen tidings as if with a sealed letter. And now he is in that last outlying suburb, and here's the Gulf, and here's the house hard by it. . . . What's this? . . . He stops—goes back, returns. He stares . . . advances . . . stares again. Here is the place their house stands; here is the willow. Here were the gates—so they've been carried off. But where's the house? And, full of black foreboding, he prowls and prowls around, talks loudly to himself—then suddenly, striking his brow, he bursts out laughing.

Night's darkness fell upon the frightened town; and long the people did not sleep, but talked of the day just past.

The morning's ray, from pale and haggard clouds, shone on a quiet capital and found no trace of yesterday's disaster; with royal purple now the hurt was overspread. And all took up the old routine. Already through the streets, now clear again, with cold indifference flowed the crowd. The clerks, quitting their lodgings, went to their desks. Hardy trade, not downed, explored his cellars plundered by the river, preparing to revenge his heavy losses out of his neighbors' pocket. And people took the boats out of the courtyards.

And Khostov, poet, favorite of the heavens, already sang in verses never to die the griefs of Neva's shores.

But my poor wretch Evgeni . . . alas! his baffled wits gave way before these blows. The mutinous roar of Neva and the winds were now resounding in his ears. Possessed by dreadful thoughts he could not utter, he strayed from place to place. Some dream was preying on him. A week, and then a month had passed—he never from that day went home. His empty lodging, when the lease expired, the landlord rented out to a poor poet. Evgeni never came to claim his things. The world forgot him soon. All day he tramped, at night slept on the docks; his food was morsels handed out from windows. His shabby clothes were torn and wearing out. The cruel children stoned him as he passed. Often he felt the coachmen's whips, for all was thoroughfare to him alike—courtyard or street, he never paid attention, always submerged in some strange inner terror. And so he dragged his miserable life, not beast nor man, not this nor that, no dweller on the earth nor yet departed spirit. . . .

One night he slept on a landing of the Neva. The summer days inclined toward fall. A foul wind blew. The dark surf dashed on the wharf, muttering grief and beating the smooth steps, like a suppliant at the door of a deaf court. The poor wretch fell asleep. The dark had come; the rain was dripping down; the wind was dreary; from far away, the sentry through the thickness of the night returned its cry. . . . Evgeni leapt from sleep; his horror had come on him; quickly he rose and started on his wandering. Then suddenly he stopped and, standing very still, his face aghast with terror, began to gaze about. The great house with its columns rose before him. And on the perron high, lifelike with lifted paw, the ornamental lions stood; and right before him, from its fenced-in rock, with outstretched arm, uprearing in the darkness, the idol sat its copper steed.

A shudder shook Evgeni. His thoughts grew terribly clear. He knew this place where the flood had had its sport, where the waves had flocked like beasts of prey about him, ruthless, in full rebellion—and he knew these lions and this square, and him he knew who, fixed and still forever, held high in the murk of night his copper head—himself whose fateful will had based the city on the sea. . . . How dreadful now in all-enveloping mist! What power of thought upon his brow! What force within! And in that steed what fire! Where dost thou gallop, haughty steed? And where wilt thou plant thy hoof? O thou who, in thy might, didst master Destiny! Didst not just so, aloft, above the very precipice, with iron curb make Russia rear?

The poor crazed fellow prowled about the pedestal, cast wild looks on the image of the lord of half the world. His chest grew tight. He pressed his brow against the cold grate; his eyes blurred with mist; a flame flashed through his heart; his blood boiled up. Somber he stood before the arrogant statue, and, clinching teeth and fists, possessed by some black force: "Good! wonderworking builder!" with quivering hate, he hissed. "You'll reckon with me yet!"— And headlong took to flight. The terrible Tsar, on the instant hot with wrath, had seemed all soundlessly to turn his face.

And through the empty square he wildly plunges, and hears behind—like rattling thunderclap—against the pounded pave the heavy-ringing gallop. And dark in the pale moon, one arm flung up, pursues the Copper Horseman, his charger's gallop ringing brass; and all night long, turn where Evgeni would, the Horseman, clattering, galloping, still pursued, hammered the Copper Horseman.

Thereafter, if he chanced upon the Square, his face, dismayed, would darken. Quick he would press his hand against his heart as if to calm its fluttering, remove his shabby cap, cast down his gaze and slink away.

A little isle there is that lies offshore. Sometimes the fisher moors there with his net, belated at the haul, and cooks his humble supper, or some dreaming Sunday boatman puts in at the desert place. No blade of grass has ever sprouted there. But there the sportive flood had brought a flimsy cottage. Like a blackened bush it showed above the water. Last spring they took it up aboard a barque. It was empty, all a wreck; but on its threshold they dragged up my madman, and there for Charity's sake they buried his cold corpse.

EDMUND WILSON.

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Shoot the Works

Friends of Labor Improve on the Trojans—Ben Stolberg Still Outside the CIO—Dubinsky Should Improve His Timing

PRIVATEERS and pirates sailed under false flags, but before they actually opened fire it was customary to hoist the true insignia. Even Blackbeard would have scorned to storm a vessel without at least a moment's warning that here was the "Jolly Roger." I could wish that some such fine spirit extended to those who do single articles or a series under the introduction: "Mr. X deserves the attention of our readers and his remarks should carry weight because for years he has been known as a friend of labor."

Long ago I learned that trade-unionists should begin to guard the chin the moment the orator of the evening opened his address with some remark about his love for the laboring man. That is the tip-off that presently he will add "but" and swing a roundhouse right against the jaw of all those who believe in organization.

The strategy of sneaking up on your adversary is an ancient one and credit for this piece of tactics has quite generally been awarded to the Trojans. But even the cleverest device can be perfected through the course of years, and the enemies of the labor movement in our day have bettered and simplified the Trojan technique. They no longer find it necessary to use the entire horse. A portion of the animal is sufficient for the purposes of the reactionaries.

Mr. Benjamin Stolberg is writing articles for the Scripps-Howard press under the title of "Inside the CIO." I challenge his right to such a title, for, to the best of my knowledge and belief, Mr. Stolberg has never been a member of any union affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organization. He has been, if you like, a free-lance writer on labor problems for many years. But he has supplemented his own knowledge with gossip and rumor which he could find by stooping. And Mr. Stolberg can stoop.

He is a burnt-cork radical who has sung for his supper on numerous occasions by showing up as the quaint revolutionist bidden to frighten and amuse the guests at Park Avenue parties. I want to be fair to Ben Stolberg. He is much more clever than many others in his skill in draping himself in sheep's clothing. Indeed I would almost pick him as a model for what the well dressed wolf should wear.

He is adroit in brushing aside the silly commentators who have tried to promote the legend that John L. Lewis has a private telephone line to the Kremlin. Often Ben Stolberg is shrewd in his evaluation of those professed friends of industrial unionism who are palpably ineffective or dangerous in their support. Mr. Stolberg's method is to try and sneak over a punch immediately after the handshake. He does not break clean.

It is a well devised system of infighting, but for all that there are technical flaws. Even a backhanded boxer cannot forever get his adversary both coming and going. In the series which the Scripps-Howard management delights to honor with front-page prominence, Ben Stolberg criticizes Norman Thomas on the ground that the Socialist leader, although well intentioned, has never formulated a definite labor policy for his party and therefore has remained ineffective in the present struggles. Whether this is a fair point or not is not my immediate business. But after assailing Thomas for failure to promote a policy, Stolberg in the same article attacks Communist leaders because they have one. Seemingly Stolberg would bestow his benediction on none but tightrope walkers.

Again he admits the deficiencies of Homer Martin as an administrator, but he proceeds from that point to identify all who would challenge Martin's leadership of the automobile workers as men under the domination of Moscow. Isn't it possible that a member of that union could war against Martin on the simple charge of utter executive unfitness without any motivating force from a particular economic belief?

I am only a visiting fireman and the internal affairs of the automobile workers are none of my business, but I have met and talked to Homer Martin on several occasions and to me he seems a stuffed-shirt and a complete phony. I don't even think he is a good speaker, and his best friends admit that he is the last man in the world who should be permitted to sit down as a member of a negotiating committee. I have also met Jay Lovestone.

I am not and have never been a member of the Communist Party and I contend that disliking Homer Martin is so easy that no commentator needs a nudge from Moscow to help him on his way.

Ben Stolberg has been shrewd in playing on the vanity of David Dubinsky. I think that Mr. Dubinsky is a labor leader of long experience and very high capacity. It seems to me that it should be possible to disagree with his recent attack on the leadership of Lewis and still have a regard for his integrity and intelligence. But at the very least the complaint might be made that David Dubinsky timed his attack in a way that has been distinctly harmful to the drive for industrial organization. The World-Telegram twinned its story of the Dubinsky speech with Stolberg's sly, undercover attack on the Committee for Industrial Organization. It was made to seem as if there were actual collaboration between the authentic labor leader and the sporadic free-lance commentator.

I believe I know Dubinsky well, and such an alliance is utterly impossible. But certainly trade-union solidarity has not been helped by the leap for the front page on the part of the president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers. Personally I blame "Pins and Needles." I believe that I understand Dubinsky's latest histrionic exhibition because once upon a time I put on a show myself and it's a terrible thing to be stagestruck. But even granting that, I see no reason why Ben Stolberg or any other juggling act should be permitted to be on the bill of a labor program.

I am puzzled by Dubinsky's complaint that he had no chance to express dissent in CIO councils. I have heard him speak long and eloquently at CIO conferences. I know, of course, that it was no part of his intention, but his most recent utterance did actually help Hague and other enemies of labor. It may be said that if a man has something on his chest he should get it off immediately. But if that theory is to prevail, David Dubinsky should have spoken immediately after the recent break in CIO-A. F. of L. negotiations. Now that the president of the ILGWU has become a showman, he should know that there are such things as cues, which must not be muffed. HEYWOOD BROUN.

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Washington Notes

Two Meetings—How the Ludlow Referendum Was Defeated—Mr. Dubinsky Criticizes; Mr. Lewis Makes a Suggestion

ALL MOVEMENTS for social good will, I suppose, have two strikes on them before they start. Nevertheless, the present attempt to bring about commercial peace fathered by Messrs. Taussig, Berle and Tugwell is much the most promising that has appeared. But after last Friday's meeting at the White House, attended by Mr. Thomas W. Lamont, Mr. Owen D. Young and Mr. John L. Lewis, as well as Messrs. Taussig and Berle, the more pessimistic administration advisers professed to see something of the dog-and-tail situation that Mr. Roosevelt finds in the case of the utilities—with the labor dog being wagged by a banker tail. Administration advisers say that Mr. Lewis is not a wholly free agent, and cannot act exclusively for the long-run advantage of the workers. He and Mr. Philip Murray are in the midst of delicate wage negotiations with Mr. Myron C. Taylor of the U.S. Steel Corporation, and reportedly have been told that if the administration should succeed in driving down steel prices, the result must be the reduction of wage rates. Persons close to Mr. Lewis deny that he has been threatened by Mr. Taylor; however, they agree that if steel prices break, the SWOC will almost certainly be confronted by an effort among steel companies, generally, to cut wages.

Mr. Roosevelt's earlier meeting last week with five big business men, headed by Mr. Colby M. Chester, was of a different kind. According to the best information obtainable, the plan for the meeting sprang full-fledged from Mr. Roosevelt's own head. Advisers who ordinarily would have been consulted were left in the dark. What seems to have happened is that Mr. Roosevelt, who regards himself as an artist in publicity and politics, was distressed by the newspaper reaction to the anti-monopoly speeches of Mr. Robert H. Jackson, Secretary Ickes and Mr. Leon Henderson. He did not object to the ribbing given big business, but apparently he decided through some sixth sense that the timing had been faulty. Thereupon he, the old maestro, determined to undertake a repair job. Within forty-eight hours, three members of the old Liberty League, together with two other magnates and Mr. Donald R. Richberg, were filing into the White House offices. Mr. Richberg, the ultimate survivor of the NRA, added the authentic artist's touch to the picture.

A circumstantial story is being told about the Ludlow amendment for a referendum on war, defeated last week in the House by the relatively close vote of 209 to 188. In the days just before the vote, the administration was in a high state of worry. The Democratic leaders of the House, Messrs. Bankhead, Rayburn and Boland, made desperate efforts to obtain a majority against the bill. Secretary Hull, who has old and warm acquaintances in the House, lent his influence. The White House secretaries lobbied in person and by telephone. Still the administration was apprehensive. An appeal went to Postmaster General Farley, and through the last few hours before the vote he worked with silent, practised ease. He had no tangible fears to offer; these had all previously been handed around by the young White House aides. He had nothing much to work with except talk about the "organization," how the party must show a solid front on a question affecting foreign relations, until the President's letter came along and helped produce the last twenty or so votes. The curious thing is that Mr. Farley should not have been summoned until almost the last moment. Even as late as a year ago he would have been the first man consulted. And it is evidence that a majority of Congress is far from being converted to Mr. Roosevelt's "active" foreign policy.

Mr. David Dubinsky's speech last week to members of the executive board of the International Ladies' Garment Workers, in which Mr. John L. Lewis and the CIO were unsparingly condemned, is regretted here. Both in and out of Congress, many liberals feel that there have already been too many mean-spirited exchanges among union leaders. Mr. Lewis has not always guarded his words, but it is not considered that this necessarily justifies Mr. Dubinsky in trying to rival him.

It is also believed here that Mr. Dubinsky's speech does not wholly square with the facts of the CIO-A. F. of L. negotiations. Observers here who were in touch with the negotiations almost hour by hour deny that the CIO was responsible for the final breakdown. The question that occupied nearly the whole of the talks was that of jurisdictional conflicts in industries where both the CIO and A. F. of L. had affiliates. Mr. Harrison and his colleagues of the A. F. of L. were comparatively generous in "spotting" industries where CIO unions were to have full sway. In saying the A. F. of L. spokesmen made a fair offer, Mr. Dubinsky is entirely accurate. But towards the end of the talks, discussion came down to ways and means of translating these promises into reality. Mr. Lewis wanted the A. F. of L. to admit the CIO as a unit. Thereafter conflicts between A. F. of L. unions and former CIO unions could be adjusted according to established A. F. of L. procedure, culminating in a vote of an A. F. of L. convention. The purpose behind this proposal can be quickly stated. What Mr. Lewis feared was delay. He was afraid that unless the CIO affiliates were legally part of the A. F. of L. and able to avail themselves of its procedural machinery, their A. F. of L. rivals would simply play for time. Ultimately the life-blood of the CIO's new, unseasoned affiliates would drain away.

This plan was rejected. About the same time Mr. Lewis and Mr. Green were brought directly into the negotiations. The CIO spokesmen, including a representative of the ILGW, voted to ask Mr. Harrison to put his previously given promises in writing. The strategic reason for this was that the A. F. of L.'s executive council was simultaneously meeting in Washington, and it was believed that if the A. F. of L. conservatives were once shown Mr. Harrison's promises in black and white, their feeling towards them could be very quickly ascertained. It would be a test of how far, in fact, Mr. Green and Mr. Harrison had the A. F. of L.'s executive council behind them. This second demand was refused, the A. F. of L. representatives insisting that their verbal assurances were enough for continued negotiations. Thereupon Mr. Lewis and his associates of the CIO withdrew.

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Two notes should be added to this recital. One is that Mr. Dubinsky's claim that the A. F. of L. made great concessions on the question of representation in the A. F. of L.'s executive council is not borne out by the testimony of observers here. Representation in the A. F. of L. constituted Point Five on the informal agenda agreed to by both sides, and was never reached during the negotiations. The second is that on the final day Mr. Lewis, with deep feeling, urged that a joint, united-front committee of the A. F. of L. and CIO be established to represent labor in its dealings with Congress and on all broad, general questions affecting the interest of workers. Mr. Lewis' own fellows in the CIO called the plan quixotic, and it was not seriously discussed. Nevertheless, it is an interesting commentary on Mr. Lewis' supposed intransigence.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Fairy Story with an Unhappy Ending—The Democratic Tradition in Wall Street—Donald Richberg's New Job

LIKE THE denizens of the race track and the casino, the gentlemen in Wall Street do not believe in fairies. But they do believe in giants. And at this moment there is a childlike hope that there is a gleam of salvation in the conference between the President, who is supposed to be a sort of evil spirit, and the great men of industry who have been conferring with him.

The wise men of the once happy old Street have an idea that these mighty persons, these great Earls meeting with the Bad King, can by the agreements which they may reach change the course of events in this sad old world. They believe that the good old capitalist system—which in a different mood they insist works automatically—may really be sent into high by its proper commanders. And that all that the Earls and the Bad King have to do is to iron out some differences between them and all will be well. In fact we are supposed to have plunged into the present depression, better known as the "recession," because the Bad King and the great Earls hate each other. Of course the hate begins with the Bad King. If he would just agree to take the tax off capital gains and undistributed profits and let the good, kind utilities alone, then overnight we would behold, as one of them expressed it, "such a putting on of steam as this country has never seen in its history."

As a result of this, the meetings of the great captains in Washington with the Bad King are looked upon in Wall Street as events of the first magnitude. And it is a little saddening, because about all it will accomplish is to swell the railroad gross by the price of a few staterooms.

One of the really fine things about society is its deep and abiding faith in the processes of democracy. And nowhere is this feeling so strong as in that tight little republic which nestles at the end [illegible] hattan Island. Self-rule in business [illegible] principles of the prin- [illegible] this great move- [illegible] reet is a security market and the Stock Exchange is just the mechanism by which the security markets are governed. And this government is according to the democratic tradition. All the members of the Exchange participate in the selection of their officers. And the Exchange itself is composed of all those who are affected by securities. It is made up of brokers and the investors—no! not the investors—but the specialists and the traders, or rather some of them, and the representatives of the corporations—no! I guess they are not in—and the bankers—no! not the bankers either—and the public interest—no! not that either—oh, well! it is made up of the brokers. And they select their officers.

There are a lot of mean-spirited people who insinuate that the rule is not any too free, however, and that the actual bossing is done by the gambling element on the Exchange. This is made up of the specialists, the floor traders and the odd-lot traders, but chiefly the specialists. It seems that each year when nominations for officers of the Exchange are made, they are set up by a nominating committee. This nominating committee has been a self-perpetuating body. When one member dies or resigns his successor is named by his colleagues on the committee. And so from year to year this small group has held possession of the machinery for naming officials. Recently the SEC became irked by this and demanded that the Exchange name a new nominating committee. The Exchange responded as might be expected by electing a committee of seven—*five of them specialists*. And thus the great democratic tradition goes on. But as long as specialists and floor traders control that institution the public may make up its mind that no essential reform will ever be made in its practices.

The progress of the world toward peace and security is dramatically told in a succession of newspaper headlines. Not only do they tell the story of our march toward peace but they illustrate how the safety of the world is to be found in arms. Here they are:

First day: "England to Spend $400,000,000 on Armaments in Coming Year."

Second day: "Italy to Build Two Battleships."

Third day: "President to Ask for 37 War Vessels."

Fourth day: "Russia Plans Naval Expansion."

Fifth day: "Britain's Objective, 1250 Planes in '38."

Mr. Donald Richberg is in again. But this time he is in with his mask, if not off, at least a little askew. In 1933, as the administration set about building its NRA of evil memory, whenever criticisms came from the liberal groups they were told to be not afraid, since all was well with men like Donald Richberg on the very inside. I recall pointing out how Mr. Richberg attempted to perpetuate the company union in the NRA by a devious stratagem and was caught red-handed. But now as the administration gets around to doing the inevitable—reviving the NRA—Mr. Donald Richberg is back again at the President's elbow. But this time no one can ask the trembling liberals to be at ease. Now he is not the counsel of the brotherhoods. He is member of one of the most notorious lobbying firms in Washington. The presence of Richberg there now is good ground for all of the most tormenting fears of the progressive groups.

JOHN T. FLYNN.

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A New Doll's House

A Doll's House, by Henrik Ibsen. Morosco Theatre. December 27, 1937.

IF IBSEN had had the gift of foresight into the future like Mr. Priestley's young-lady novelist—which is the only point at which, so far as I could see, his now widely publicized eight years' study of the theory of time has got into "Time and the Conways," an *oeuvre* that might at best amount to, say, time in a teacup—if, to repeat, Ibsen could have managed such cut-backs and cut-forths as this heroine, he would have seen at the Morosco a production that is precisely what the Ibsen tradition needs, the Ibsen problem needs, and the Ibsen audience, implicit in so many of us and in the serious theatre, needs. Precisely. With such an instance, important and perhaps cardinal, as this on hand, what la-di-da this London importation, with its maiden sashes, poetical twilightness and the fiction of its prophetic visualizations, becomes!

I have seen this play of Ibsen's in numerous productions, some of them by now virtually stage incunabula—Mrs. Fiske's for instance. The situation here concerned is this:

Following the poetic plays of "Brand" and "Peer Gynt" and a "world-historic drama" like "Emperor and Galilean," Ibsen came to his modern series which, as it were, opened with "The League of Youth." "The Pillars of Society" (1877) followed, and then "A Doll's House" (1879). Anyone studying this play and its author will see that dramas like "Ghosts" and "An Enemy of the People" and ultimately "The Wild Duck" (1884) are due to follow. By this time Ibsen had turned from poetic forms and was declaring that verse was and had been injurious to drama. All but night-club innocents, first-night celebrants and the *genus irritabile* of theatre columnists know by now that "A Doll's House" in its day made a great stir. It was regarded as an attack on marriage; and a perpetual debate was implied as to whether Nora should have left home and expressed herself or expressed herself and stayed at home. The climax of the disturbance was when—we have all heard that story—the Norwegian hostess wrote on her invitations to dine that you were requested not to discuss "A Doll's House." (These days in our country, if a producer is willing to give it, people send their children.)

In due time, some ten or so years later, the play was allowed to be shown in London. But the ending was changed—Nora came home or stayed there, something of the sort—and the title became "Breaking a Butterfly." Meanwhile the translation generally current amid theatres and libraries was William Archer's. It is a translation full of conscience and frightened aridity. Norwegians who can read both languages chafe at it; theatre people who know, to varying degrees, English only, feel themselves straitjacketed and sigh for rhythm, color and the beat and shading of living speech.

I used to fret over the issue, telling myself that Archer had done the Ibsen grape much harm, and that what remained would be to divorce old barren reason from the bed and take the daughter of the vine to spouse. But this production by Mr. Jed Harris, the play adapted by Mr. Thornton Wilder, acted by Miss Ruth Gordon, Mr. Dennis King and an excellent company, set and dressed well by Mr. Donald Oenslager, has helped me to ponder all that again. Mr. Wilder's version does not, I take it, pretend to offer subtleties and profound renovations derived from the original, but merely to coax and palliate into speakable speech the Archer renderings on one hand, and on the other to cut here and there passages of too much sheer theatrical cliché for us who are so modern, and to pare down, in seeming at least, various elements that combine themselves in a manner that suggests artifice, outworn theatre artifice. This would include passages that suggest the smug even, the overmoralistic, cant, sententiousness—not a little of "A Doll's House" is fairly embarrassing to hear spoken on the stage—take for example that final line, where Helmer, Nora's husband, says, "Empty. She's gone. (*A hope inspires him*) Ah! The miracle of miracles—?"

What do we mean by the sententious, the cliché? We mean the superimposition of a sentiment, a neat password, a licking of the chops, mental or otherwise.

And yet perhaps, now with the advantage of this distinguished and inevitable experiment, I see how this humanizing of the text, this reduction, or socialization, of the play to a more reasonable possibility and a more creditable taste, may prove to cut down certain effects hitherto experienced from its production. Perhaps the mere stupidity, or inhumanity, of the Archer style may have taken the place of what might have been a high, grand medium for the actors to confront. It is also possible that racially we believed in the seriousness of this foreign dramatist in a direct ratio to his dullness, so that Ibsen through both boring and irritating us made us feel his Jeremiads. On the basis of this problem alone the current production is invaluable.

It should be said that the theatre neatness of Ibsen's technique in this early social drama of his still remains intact and impressive; the interest remains lively, the acting possibilities brilliant and flexible. People with discernment when they see it will not be asking who would have thought the old man had so much blood in him? Mr. Dennis King as Helmer gives a performance that could only come from an actor with large experience and guarantee; he is always right in the portrayal, and knows how to wait undisturbed for his triumphs until the final tensions of the play (notably the scene for the sake of which Ibsen himself said the play was written). The casting is generally excellent. Miss Ruth Gordon eludes the "violent substance" that Henry James attributed to Ibsen's characters. And she is spared the accustomed clichés and pat theatric tags—they sometimes amount to vulgarities either in the dramatist or in the character, take your choice, but it's Ibsen really—that the stage Noras, not always regretfully, have had to contend with. Actually Ibsen, using his experience as theatrical producer of Scribe, Augier and other practitioners of "the well made play," works a definite element of sure-fire into the piece. But time settles these matters. "A Doll's House" is not basically any more of a problem play than Euripides' play of "Hippolytus" was, save only that by a special larding on of the social-moral, the problem becomes the conscious pretext, just as a bull's sex is his profession. And, differing in that from the Nora of, for example, Mrs. Fiske, other Noras from among the early Ibsen, retains
earlier

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ding and trouncing, but for this day and time, Miss Gordon's Nora is a subtle, technically expert, tremulous and highly intelligent creation. STARK YOUNG.

LIKE Strauss's "Also Sprach Zarathustra," "A Mass of Life," the Delius cantata to which the Schola Cantorum a few days since gave its first American performance, is based on Nietzsche's great poem. And it is better than Strauss's virtuosic piece. Doubtless it is somewhat sweet, silky and perfumed, a characteristic work of the musical Pre-Raphaelite's. But it has a certain creative breath; and the inspiration oftentimes triumphs over technical weaknesses and transmits feelings which have not quite found their unique equivalents in form. It is also closer to Nietzsche's experience than is the tone-poem: the experience of those who find within themselves the consciousness of the Goddess Life, and make their peace with her and themselves her mouthpiece. Its accents are rapturous; its language similarly sensuous to Nietzsche's marvelously glowing, sounding, tactile speech. Amid charming romantic pages it contains certain passages which finely and magically transmit the poem's noonday, evening and nocturnal moods. Such are the one where the horns liquidly call through the sheer orchestral veil; and the jocund double-fugue "The Dance Song"; and "The Night Song," with its music like gently rocking lights. With "Sea-Drift," the Mass surely is Delius's strongest work.

PAUL ROSENFELD.

Walt Disney's Grimm Reality

TO SAY of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" that it is among the genuine artistic achievements of this country takes no great daring. In fact, outside of Chaplin, Disney's is the one Hollywood name that any corn doctor of art and culture dare mention without fear of losing face, or on the other hand of having to know too much about the subject. There is this to be said of Disney, however: he is appreciated by all ages, but he is granted the license and simplification of those who tell tales for children, because that is his elected medium to start with. It is not easy to do amusing things for children, but the more complex field of adult relations is far severer in its demands.

"Snow White" is a fairy tale, surely the most vivid and gay and sweet in the world; it is done in color, photographed on different planes to give depth, and it runs almost an hour and a half. Some of the short cartoons have been more of a riot, some have been more tender even. But this is sustained fantasy, the animated cartoon grown up. The fairy-tale princess is just what you would have her; the witch is a perfect ringer for Lionel Barrymore (not by accident, I take it); and the seven dwarfs have been perfectly humanized by somewhat the same technique, though each is more a composite of types, not quite identifiable. The animals of course are as uncannily studied and set in motion as they have always been.

The Disney artists and animators are practically zoölogical, nearer to the actual life of animals than any who have endowed it with human traits for purposes of fable. Take the young deer in the little scene where the forest life first gathers around Snow White: shy but sniffing forward, then as she starts to pat it, the head going down, ears back, the body shrinking and tense, ready to bound clear; then reassurance, body and head coming up and forward to push against the hand—half a dozen motions shrewdly carried over from the common cat. Or take the way (later) the same deer moves awkward and unsteady on its long pins in the crush of animals milling about, as it should, but presently is graceful in flight, out in front like a flash. Disney has animals that are played up for comedy, like the turtle here, the lecherous vultures, the baby bird whose musical attempts are a source of alternate pride and embarrassment to his parents (on a finale he will get as high as eight inches straight up from the limb); but even in these cases, the exaggeration is based on typical form and trait.

The story is familiar in its simple fantasy. The castle, the step-mother with her black arts, Snow White escaping in the forest and keeping house for the little men; the witch seeking her out with the apple of living death; finally the young prince coming to break the charm. But all of Disney's fantasy starts out with a simple frame of story: the main body of the thing is incident. And the incidents start from a firm base in the realism of the every-day, serving to steady the fantastic (dwarfs, witches, alchemy) either by complementing it with the matter-of-fact, or by becoming fantastic through a seemingly logical progression from their common shape and function. Thus the fairy-tale dwarfs, in their diamond mine and home, go about their business in a highly natural manner, digging, appraising, grading, leaving the dirty dishes and going to bed. And thus the birds and animals, invading the empty house with the shy fits and starts appropriate to them as real birds and animals, fall to helping the girl clean up with highly unnatural abilities (the squirrel's tail for a bottle brush, other tails for brooms and dusters, the birds winding up cobwebs, flying with sheets).

I was disappointed to see the comedy faltering at times here. Such things as running into doors and trees on the dignified exit, the jumbled consonant (bood goy, I mean goob doy, I mean . . .), headers into various liquids, etc., are short of good Disney. For the most part, the thing is as ingenious as ever, the idiosyncracies of each dwarf quickly established and made capital of—Grumpy, Dopey and Sneezy in particular—the flow of comedy through animism still on that level at which Disney's men have never been equaled. Witness the organ pipes in that wonderful music-hour sequence, made of penguins, the vent holes being choked off with little clappers, Grumpy frequently losing patience with his stop and whacking them shut by hand.

It is not all comic and quaint. The imaginative transformation of the stepmother, her mission, flight and death (the vultures banking slowly down in the dark air), make a suspense and chase interval that will put your heart back a few seconds; and there is something not mawkish but gentle and nice about the little girl, her face and singing and adventures in friendliness with every living thing. Something beautiful about all of it, I think, because it does not try to be wise about fairy tales, or fairy talish about its birds, rabbits, people. And all of it, the whole feature-length true motion picture, is nothing but a hundred-odd thousand colored drawings, photographed, and set to music.

The art work is fine, particularly the castle at night, the scenes in the woods, the march home of the little men. The color is the best ever, though it is true that its pastels would

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be up against more difficulty in a film less deliberately imaginative. And the music is as much a part of the picture as it always is in the Disney scorings, with nice songs and a rollicking chant and swell background stuff for the moods of the story.

Disney gives credit to his directors, animators, musicians in a way that is heartening to see and a list as long as your arm; but while it is true that his pictures are built on the conference method, good ideas being kicked around until they suggest others, there is the fact that he apparently has known how to pick his men, train them and give them free rein to contribute their individual best. A film is a collective enterprise anyway and should be made that way; but in general there are too few men of talent at the top who have the leadership and patience, the exaltation of job over ego, to do it. Walt Disney is a pioneer in more things than his conception of and tireless experiment with the animated cartoon as a reflection of life. Now that the best picture of 1937 has been adjudicated, awarded, etc., the best and most important picture for 1938 is called "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs." OTIS FERGUSON.

The Bandwagon

I do not like the term "profit system" or "capitalistic system." I prefer rather that we call it the "Anglo-Saxon" or the "American way of life."—*Lewis J. Taber, master of the National Grange, speaking at the convention of the National Association of Manufacturers.*

He strongly disapproved of alcohol, tobacco and polygamy as emotional outlets; he recommended prayer in their place.—*Dr. Kenneth J. Tillotson, instructor in Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School, in a speech reported in The Harvard Crimson.*

No one wants a war in this country. To me a war between the United States and Japan is unthinkable. But how can any government conduct any affairs with a foreign power if it has to submit the question of war to a national referendum?—*George Sokolosky, writing in The New York Herald Tribune.*

Paramount has been making a picture at Palm Springs called "Her Jungle Love" with Dorothy Lamour. Cavorts through the picture a well known simian character actor, Jiggs.

So long as Jiggs worked in black-and-white pictures, there was no cause for complaint, but when Mr. Will Hays's official glommers took a look at Jiggs in Technicolor, it was just too much. A pair of hair pants was ordered to cover the spots where monkeys usually are bald.—*News item in Rob Wagner's Script, Beverly Hills, Calif.*

BROTHERHOOD-OF-MAN DEPARTMENT

It wasn't a pleasant sight, but there is something heartening and refreshing in news of men fighting for jobs rather than fighting to keep from working.—*Editorial paragraph in The Wall Street Journal.*

FATHER, DEAR FATHER

The sweet little song which follows was sung by FATHER just before He rose to speak.

Who are you talking about . . . mmmnnn?
Who are you talking about . . . mmmnnn?
Oh, who are you talking about. . . .?
(Answered by assembly)
Talking about FATHER DIVINE!

DEAR LORD, WE THANK THEE.

FATHER speaks as follows:

PEACE, EVERYONE: ("Peace, FATHER DEAR!" happily responded the great assembly.) Once again I have risen as I have stood and I stand as I have arisen with that thought in mind. Whilst listening to the last speaker, My Thought I brought for consideration, "Who are you talking about?" This thought I brought as a questioner to see or to let you see and stress vividly within yourself, who it is of whom you speak and consider before you would go further in speaking and in thinking.—*From a report of a Father Divine meeting, printed in the weekly The New Day.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic.—THE EDITORS.

CORRESPONDENCE

The UAW on Foreign Policy

[BY TELEGRAPH]

SIR: The Executive Board of the United Automobile Workers has unanimously passed the following resolution representing the official position of 400,000 auto workers: "Whereas an obvious attempt is now being made by the organized press of the country to involve the American people in a conflict with Japan merely for the purpose of protecting the vested interests of a few large American corporations in China, such as the Standard Oil Companies, and for the protection of such interests American Marines and soldiers have been dispatched to China to remain in the war area, and

"Whereas, labor is vitally interested in any policy of this country which may involve the people of this country in a war with another nation because of the fact that in a war labor does most of the dying;

"Therefore be it resolved, that this executive board does hereby give its wholehearted endorsement to the constitutional amendment as it was originally introduced by Senator La Follette and Representative Ludlow in Congress requiring a national referendum on the question of whether this country should engage in any war other than one of defense against invasion of this country; and be it further

"Resolved, that the President of the United States immediately issue a warning to all American citizens and their families in the war area that an opportunity will be afforded them to be removed from such war area and that unless they avail themselves of such opportunity no further protection will be given them by the American government and that, after having given full opportunity to all such American citizens and their families to be removed from such war area, the President withdraw all of the armed forces of the United States from China. And be it further

"Resolved, that it is the expression of this executive board that the foreign policy of the United States shall not be formulated or made dependent upon the protection of the vested or property interests in foreign countries of the large corporations in this country but rather that such foreign policy should express the wholehearted desire of the American people for international peace.

"Consistent with this position we oppose the militaristic and warlike aims of the fascist countries and their aggressor policies

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against other nations and propose a strengthening of the popular boycott of Japanese goods and support direct aid to China; and be it further

"Resolved, that this executive board is opposed to any attempt to mask military expenditures for weapons of aggression under the guise of bringing returned prosperity to this country. We believe the needs of the working people in this country require expenditures by the government for the unemployed. Armament, if any is necessary, should only be on the basis of protection against invasion and not to protect profits of United States big-business interests abroad."

HOMER MARTIN,
International President and Editor,
Detroit, Mich. The United Automobile Worker.

The WPA Sewing Project

SIR: May I make a few comments about Colonel Brehon B. Somervell's answer to my letter concerning the WPA sewing project in New York City [The New Republic, January 19]?

The WPA was begun to give jobs to the unemployed. Colonel Somervell admits that a thousand WPA workers were fired; and then the speed-up system was inaugurated. New machinery was added. Thus a governmental agency which was designed to give employment fires people, introduces a speed-up, adds new machinery because the products of the project are wanted by the Emergency Relief Bureau. It may be true that these workers are not so efficient as those in private industry; but they are relatively elderly women who have lost skill through too long a sojourn on home relief; a condition directly due to the administration which two years ago promised to put all employables on the WPA. Further, a delegation of union leaders from the needle trades told Colonel Somervell months ago that there were no jobs in private industry. Who could have informed him otherwise, in the light of the well known unemployment situation in the needles trades, is beyond me.

Finally, it is my contention that workers on the sewing project are intimidated by a group of guards with a Pinkerton and strikebreaking background. If a few of these people were fired, and a few union members who were discriminately discharged, rehired, the main part of the project workers would vote against Colonel Somervell's policies. The main point, however, is that these thousand project workers, along with thousands of others in this city and throughout the country, have been sent back to home relief, where they get 7¼ cents for each meal, $1 a year for clothing for their families, and 5 cents each week for household expenses. Can the WPA justify this?

OSCAR R. FUSS, Vice-President,
New York City. Workers' Alliance of Greater New York.

Britain's New Coal Bill

SIR: May I call your attention to a serious misinterpretation in your discussion of the recent bill for so-called nationalization of coal in Great Britain? [The New Republic, November 24.]

You rightly describe Great Britain's coal industry as "ailing": indeed it is threatened with bankruptcy. It follows therefore that the industry cannot afford to pay what you truly describe as "exorbitant" royalties. It follows therefore that the wealthy and influential owners of these royalties, among whom are prominently included members of the royal family and the Church of England, will suffer severe loss of capital, unless the government comes to their rescue. In doing so, to the exorbitant extent of £66,540,000, the Conservative government is behaving strictly true to form: it is only licking the hand that feeds it. Your editorial, on the other hand, indicates that the Conservatives by "nationalizing" the mines have "in characteristically British" fashion adopted one of the major proposals of the Labor Party, and that the consequences will be "rationalization of the industry in the interests of consumers and wage-earners." . . .

The coal mines have not been "nationalized" in the Labor Party sense of the term. Only the royalties—rents from the land out of which the coal is taken or across which it is transported—have been taken over. . . . The important fact remains that ownership, management and control remain in private hands. This is a government move to facilitate monopolistic-capitalist development of the coal industry, and is hardly a socialist measure. Rationalization will undoubtedly take place . . . but under monopoly capitalism, rationalization has meant a rise in prices for small consumers, for wage-earners it has always brought speed-up, lay-offs and wage-cuts. Time will show whether or not this bill will benefit consumers and wage-earners: all we know for the present is that it has very handsomely rescued the royalty owners and coal owners.

Oxford, England. JEAN MURRAY.

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Congressman Maury Maverick receives two nominations from correspondents. Henry Stoner of Barberton, Ohio, proposed him (before Mr. Reed had been named) as the "only logical choice of real progressives to succeed Justice Sutherland" on the Supreme Court. John Switalski of Chicago thinks that he should have a half-hour program on the radio as an antidote to the views of Coughlin, Thompson, Johnson, *et al.* . . . Charles H. Prouty of Tracy, Minnesota, describes his plan for obtaining democratic control of the economic forces of the nation "by applying restrictions, at present common to coöperatives, by means of federal incorporation laws requiring that corporations allow each stockholder one and only one vote." . . . Clarence Armstrong of Warners, New York, commenting on Bruce Bliven's article "This Is Where I Came in" (January 5), reports that while he thinks the present is an inopportune moment to start a war against fascism, "a strong threat of force on the part of the United States will do much to keep the Japanese generals from dominating their civil government."

Helen Thompson, executive secretary of the Book and Magazine Guild, New York City, writes of her surprise at the failure of The New Republic's editorial "The Labor Spy" (January 5), on the report of the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee, to include a specific mention of the publishing industry's participation in the use of industrial espionage. . . . Mary Fox, executive secretary of the League for Industrial Democracy, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City, writes of the plans for the seventh annual series of lectures by Norman Thomas, Harry W. Laidler, Goodwin Watson, Chao-ting Chi, Roger Baldwin and others to be given during the next two months in eighteen cities in the East, South and Middle West. Interested readers may obtain further information by writing to the League's headquarters in New York City.

F. J. Huizenga of Oak Park, Illinois, expresses his agreement with the article "Next—Life Insurance" by T. R. B. (December 8): "It's time for a movement to compel life-insurance companies to make accurate presentation of the services they are offering. There is no good reason why life-insurance companies could not furnish a blueprint of each policy they offer for sale, showing at every age just how the policy-holder's premium is broken up and what happens to it, and just what the rights and privileges of both parties to the contract are, with nothing hidden or minimized."

What's on the Air?

Morris S. Tremaine, comptroller of New York State, discusses "The Capital Gains Tax," Friday, January 21, 4 P.M., CBS.

Members of the Columbia University faculty and student body discuss the question "What Place Have the Humanities in the College Curriculum?" Saturday, January 22, 2:15 P.M., CBS.

S. K. Ratcliffe and Major Strachey Barnes speak on "The Struggle for Power in the Mediterranean," Thursday, January 27, 9:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

Musical and dramatic programs of the week include the Metropolitan Opera Company broadcast of Puccini's "Barber of Seville" with Lily Pons, Saturday, January 22, 1:55 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; a Columbia Workshop presentation of "Alexander the Great," Saturday, January 22, 8 P.M., CBS; the NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini, Saturday, January 22, 10 P.M., NBC-Red and Blue Networks; the Philharmonic-Symphony Society of New York, Sunday, January 23, 3 P.M., CBS; and the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra with José Iturbi, Thursday, January 27, NBC-Blue Network.

All times given are Eastern Standard Time.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

George F. Babbitt's Revenge

SINCLAIR LEWIS'S new novel[1] is flat, obvious and full of horseplay that wouldn't raise a laugh at an Elks' convention. From the first page to the last there isn't a character that rises above the level of a good comic strip (say "Little Orphan Annie"). Lewis's dialogue is considerably below the level of a comic strip; it does not bear the faintest resemblance to any idiom spoken by Americans in 1937. There was a time when he listened to Midwesterners talking and imitated their speech with accuracy. But he now sounds as if he had grown so deaf, psychologically at least, that he was unable to hear or imitate anybody except Sinclair Lewis.

I am going to be told that "The Prodigal Parents" is merely one of his light diversions—one of his potboilers, in other words—like "Free Air" in 1919 and "Mantrap" in 1926. The answer is that his serious novels have been getting flimsier and his light novels soggier until it is hard to tell the difference between them. Ever since "Arrowsmith" in 1925 his work has been going downhill—"Elmer Gantry" was good to fair, "Dodsworth" was fair to weak, "Ann Vickers" was almost unreadable and "Work of Art" unspeakable. Lewis was never a graceful writer (except in his public addresses) but in his best novels he had the strength of a man who knew exactly where he was going. He worked hard, he gathered and classified material, he got inside his characters (even the unpleasant ones) and he gave an amazingly complete picture. Now he seems to be writing with his eyes half-closed and one hand behind his back. I am not saying anything that hasn't been common gossip among the critics for the last five years. It is time they quit being polite in public to bad novels because they like Red Lewis (as everybody does). If they respect him too, they might try to tell him the truth.

The truth is that "The Prodigal Parents" is below the mean average level of The Saturday Evening Post (compare it, for example, with a recent serial called "Fugitive Father," by Clarence Budington Kelland). It is the story of an elderly and prosperous automobile dealer in Sachem, New York. Frederick William Cornplow, like Job, has afflictions, and these afflictions take the human form of his two grown children. Howard is a good boy at heart, handsome and hopeful but just a little soft in the head. Sara is a virtuous busybody, interested first in communism (till her Communist runs away) and then in interior decorating (till she marries her boss). Both of them depend on their father for food, clothing, shelter, moral support and money—always more of it. They are supposed to represent Modern Youth and the New Generation, but they come no nearer to doing it than those living statues in white balbriggan underwear that used to infest the vaudeville stage came to representing Patriotism or Purity. Father Cornplow decides to run away from them with Hazel, his wife, and follow the Golden Road to Samarkand. The last part of the book is better: it reads like pretty good advertising copy for a travel agency.

From beginning to end there is scarcely an incident or a character that has not been used—and used to better advantage—in Lewis's other novels. Thus, the oafish cousin, Cal Tillery, is simply Shad Ledue from "It Can't Happen Here." The daughter-in-law, sweet Annabel, is Leora resurrected from "Arrowsmith." The scenes in Europe are notes left over from "Dodsworth." Most of the book, however, is based on "Babbitt"; and the hero is George F. Babbitt himself—grown fatter, softer and wiser, now selling automobiles instead of real estate, but still the same progressive, upright, Christian and only moderately dishonest man of affairs. In moving from Zenith to Sachem, New York, he has carried with him his entire family (except for Tinka, the youngest). Ted Babbitt (as Howard) has grown more foolish; Verona Babbitt (as Sara) is a little meaner but no wiser nor a day older; Myra Babbitt (as Hazel) has changed not at all.

But this new book is not merely a botched copy of "Babbitt"; it is also "Babbitt" turned upside down. In the earlier novel—the best he ever wrote—Lewis was portraying the stupidity and sheeplikeness of American business men. He hadn't much to say about the working class, but still, when he described a strike in Zenith, he left no doubt of his sympathy with the strikers. In the new book, however, his attitude toward the workers—any workers—is one of almost hysterical fear and hostility. They are insolent and lazy and they squirt only a quarter enough grease into the differential of any car they are repairing, so that the rear end burns out, months later. If they are finally discharged for the best of reasons, the government takes charge of them and supports them in luxury on the proceeds of taxes levied against their hard-working employers. Worst of all, they sometimes listen to a communist agitator like Gene Silga, "as dangerous as a rattlesnake." Rattlesnakes ought to be crushed underfoot. Down with the Marxist hordes, down with the Reds in Washington! Up, up, with the International Rotary!

And now a triumphant hymn to the business man:

> From Fred Cornplow's family, between B. C. 1937 and A. D. 1937, there came, despite an occasional aristocratic Byron or an infrequent proletarian John Bunyan, nearly all the medical researchers, the discoverers of better varieties of wheat, the poets, the builders, the singers, the captains of great ships. Sometimes his name has been pronounced Babbitt; sometimes it has been called Ben Franklin; and once, if Eugene O'Neill may be trusted, he went by the style of Marco Polo and brought back from civilized China to barbaric Europe the sound of camel bells, and the silken tents, scented with sandalwood, which have overshadowed the continent ever since.
>
> He is the eternal bourgeois, the bourjoyce, the burgher, the Middle Class, whom the Bolsheviks hate and imitate, whom the English love and deprecate, and who is most of the population worth considering in France and Germany and these United States.

He is, in other words, Babbitt triumphant, Babbitt addressing his fellow members of the Zenith Real Estate Board. I turned back to that speech, as reported on pages 179-188 of the earlier novel. "It's the fellow," Babbitt proclaimed, "with four to ten thousand a year, say, and an automobile and a nice little family in a bungalow on the edge of town, that makes the wheels of progress go round." If Babbitt's speech to the realtors was funny (and Lewis thought it

[1] The Prodigal Parents, by Sinclair Lewis. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.50.

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was), then his own solemn address to Fred Cornplow must be funny too. It is the same speech.

In trying to explain the book, I imagined a little fiction that is certainly no stranger than the truth. Babbitt, I told myself, was a real man, and he was furious at Sinclair Lewis for having made him ridiculous before the whole country. He determined to have his revenge, but he was dissuaded by his friends of the Boosters' Club. "We hate him too," said Chum Frink, "but what's the use of killing him? He's killing himself by writing bad novels." Babbitt read the novels, one after another, and decided that his friends were right. But then Lewis wrote "It Can't Happen Here," which, though not a good novel, was a splendid pamphlet. Babbitt decided that something had to be done.

Through the sinister Vergil Gunch, he was offered the help of a certain foreign power. He now had money at his disposal, and secret agents, and he laid his plans quite carefully. First he kidnaped Lewis from his farm in Vermont. Then for ten days he tortured him, giving him nothing to eat or drink and nothing to read but Dorothy Thompson's column. The victim died in frightful agony.

But how could the crime be hidden? Obviously there was only one answer. Babbitt must disguise himself with freckles and a red wig and play the part of the murdered novelist. To make deception doubly sure, he must write a novel and sign it with the name of Sinclair Lewis. That explains "The Prodigal Parents" as no other story, true or false, can explain it. Babbitt gets apologies, Babbitt gets himself glorified, and his victim, the late critic of middle-class stupidity, gets blamed for publishing a novel so stupid that the middle class won't read it.

MALCOLM COWLEY.

Saintly Brigands

The Third Hour, by Geoffrey Household. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. $2.50.

WHEN Manuel Vargas, waiter, brigand and puritan, opened his heart to Toby Manning, toy salesman, in a Valparaiso brothel, to confess his discontent with brute mankind, the Order of the Third Hour was spontaneously founded. Vargas had the backing in bullion stolen from the Mexican government; Manning knew a handful of noble folk who could be trusted to serve the Order's ideal, to proselytize and to teach by example the code of true aristocracy. The noble, the honorable, the *infeliz* of every class, were to be recruited; communism and fascism were at once to be milked of the good in each and discouraged individually; benevolent, feudal landlords living in non-religious monasteries would recreate the culture of Europe. It sounded grand to Mr. Household's characters. Whitehead was in a clerical rut. Ottery was a celibate alcoholic. The Jew Bendrihem had insufficient use for his fortune and his kindliness. Paolo, the communist laborer, had hitherto protested class inequality only by flinging typhus into capitalist cars. Vassiliev, intimidating the mob with a syringe, needed most of all the mob's devotion. And the Countess Irma, in flight from the world's and her body's cruelty, saw the Order as a refuge.

This is a deftly directed, spiritual adventure story. Swinging his characters across Europe and the Latin Americas, through political and personal revolutions, Mr. Household has built with them a tale that is as nicely knit and as vivid as any we have had for a long time. His conclusions may be sophistical, but they are made interesting by the skill of his approach to them, and the fluent persuasion of his style.

HASSOLDT DAVIS.

Semantics in Demotic

The Tyranny of Words, by Stuart Chase. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 410 pages. $2.50.

IN HIS newest book Stuart Chase has given us a very entertaining and easily read account of a study that is still in the course of mapping out its territory, and may some day have a chair all its own in our colleges, probably called the chair of "semantics." Semantics deals with the subject of communication, meaning, the interpretation of signs.

Sometimes the students of semantics seem to be stressing the genetic, psychological or historical aspects of the question: they observe and speculate to determine how meanings arise. Anthropologists like Malinowsky throw special insight upon this aspect of the subject, as do experimental psychologists like Pavlov and Watson, Koffka and Koehler. Psychoanalysis also makes a distrusted, but probably necessary, contribution here. Sometimes the emphasis seems to be primarily upon an attempt to perfect an accurate system of signs or pointers, regardless of the ways in which our meanings, or lack of meanings, or muddled meanings, arise and operate in everyday vocabulary. The speculations of the logical positivists, stemming largely from the symbolic logic of the "Principia Mathematica," seem to stress this aspect. Sometimes semantics seems to be mainly a new weapon for the debunker who, revolting at the balderdash meted out daily in the press, pulpit, radio, political exhortation, goodwill advertising, legal and economic theory, etc., wants to find some quick and efficient way of dissolving said balderdash.

In "The Tyranny of Words," Stuart Chase, like Thurman Arnold in "The Symbols of Government" and "The Folklore of Capitalism," is interested primarily in this third emphasis. He is looking for a solvent, a corrosive, that will dispatch verbal obstacles with as much speed as possible. To do this, he first picks some salient moments from writers like Korzybsky, Malinowsky, Ogden, Richards and Bridgman that give one an inkling of fields one and two—and then he plunges into a varied assortment of case histories where he debunks with zest the thinking of right, center and left.

By the use of his rough and ready instruments he does good work in making hash of the well paying verbosities uttered by the priesthood of the right. That is all to the good. But unfortunately, the same instruments also dissolve (as Chase explains on pp. 191-3) a definition like this by Harold Laski:

> I suggest the conclusion that Fascism is nothing but monopoly capitalism imposing its will on the masses which it has deliberately transformed into slaves. The ownership of the instruments of production remains in private hands.

Though conceding that this statement *seems* clear to "a reader of The New Republic living in New York," Chase contends that the enlightened student of semantics "is not disposed to argue with Mr. Laski, because the apparent meaning has faded into a series of semantic blanks. Laski is not necessarily wrong; he is saying nothing worth listening to. Knowledge cannot be spread, sensible action cannot be taken, on the basis of such talk."

To arrive at this conclusion, Chase suggests that many necessary ramifications and modifications are omitted from Laski's *definition*. Completely overlooking the fact that a definition is, by the necessities of the case, a *summary*, and

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that Laski has written a great deal giving explicit body to this summary, he finds the definition itself meaningless. Chase has warned, at many points in his book, against taking words at their face value, without reference to their place in a total context of thought and situation. Yet here he seems to be doing precisely what he warns against. And I do not see how any just theory of meanings could require that a writer give a summarization of his thought without omitting all the ramifications and modifications of that thought.

There must surely be something wrong with instruments of analysis that can debunk so drastically. Chase is dubious about the word "slaves," for instance, recalling that it falls in with "a stock phrase in socialist propaganda." Yet, applying the same enlightened test, we might question the word "tyranny" in Chase's own title, if we simply jumped on this *summary* of his book without reference to the material with which he gave it body. And he notes that the enlightened student of semantics "never saw an 'ism' imposing its will," thereby debunking Laski's metaphorical shortcut as though it were intended to be taken literally as a completely and explicitly filled-out statement. To show that a summary requires filling out is not *per se* to show that the summary is nonsense. We do not know whether the summary is nonsense until we have examined the ways in which the author himself has given it body.

The difficulties arise, I think, from the overly empirical bias which Chase adopts in his approach to the subject of meaning. Empiricism is, of course, a philosophy—one among several—but Chase begins by adopting it under the "down with philosophy" slogan. *Other* philosophies are philosophies—*his own* is just sound "fact." He proposes to try meanings by the reassuring test of seeing, touching, feeling, weighing, smelling. Hence, since many meanings are *interpretations* of *relationships* as disclosed from a certain *perspective* or *point of view,* you are going to find a lot of very necessary meanings dissolved, once you permit a man to impose a naïvely empiricist philosophy in the name of anti-philosophy.

Chase also bolsters up this approach appealingly by borrowings from Bridgman's philosophy of physical science, called "operationalism." According to this, the meaning of a concept is to be tested by some actual operation performed in a laboratory, or recorded on a meter reading. There is no point here in attempting a critique of Bridgman's theory. (The reader is referred to a very stimulating article on the subject by R. B. Lindsay in Philosophy of Science for October.) My present point is that, even if we granted its validity for the physical sciences (despite several centuries of fruitful scientific development done largely in violation of it), we could still legitimately demand that Chase offer explicit reasons why one may forcibly induce the migration of this perspective from the realm of physics to the realm of social relationships. The migration may be justified, but the justification is not offered. Chase, by the unconscious ruse of putting forth his philosophy in the name of anti-philosophy, spares himself the trouble; a perspective is simply made to migrate from one realm to another, with no discussion of this migratory process itself, no discussion of the metaphorical function that arises when such migration takes place.

It is my suspicion that, if you would seek an "operation" or a meter reading, or a test of seeing, feeling, tasting, when you come to the interpretation of a relationship as disclosed from a given perspective, you are going to debunk meanings with a vengeance. So thoroughly, in fact, that whenever you want to stop debunking, and would adopt a positive policy of your own, you can do so only by pulling your punch and not applying to yourself the solvent you apply to your opponents. Thus, when in a pure debunking mood, Chase dismisses "the going canons of philosophy, theology and the rest" on the ground that they deal with "ideas and purposes." He distrusts a concern with such matters as "purposes," because you can't see them, touch them, test them "operationally." But when he is in a normative, hortatory mood, he writes, "The controlling issue, the real task for statesmen, is to find the human purpose to be accomplished in a given situation." So far as I can see, you could not do this unless you offered, implicitly, a philosophy of human purpose.

So I question whether it is legitimate for a writer to save himself embarrassment by putting forward a philosophy under the name of no philosophy, a device that enables him simply to avoid the issues at every important point. I question whether a theory of meanings can be put forward simply in the reassuring name of "the facts." Rather, the student of communication must evolve an explicit critique concerned with the processes of making judgments, of putting forth structures of judgments, or rationalizing these structures (by tests of internal consistency), of showing their scope and relevancy to human situations, of verbalizing the role played by metaphorical migrations (transplanted perspectives) in the interpretative process. References to apples, skins, cats, caterpillars and meter readings sound homey, and as such contribute solace by making a complex field look simple. But those who would banish philosophy from the study of meaning must simply make a show of throwing out by the front door what they covertly smuggle in again by the back door.

KENNETH BURKE.

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A Specialist in the General

This Is Our World, by Paul B. Sears. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press. 304 pages. $2.50.

PERHAPS it was pollen, those minute specks floating out over the world in countless myriads on the mission of generating life, that took the mind of Paul B. Sears outward in widening circles over field, forest and city, nature and man. Starting as a botanist specializing in pollen, he later became an ecologist, that is, one who studies the interactions among plants, animals and environment that result in organic communities. The boundaries of ecology are nebulous. Paul Sears might begin, let us say, by studying the community of life existing in a cubic foot of soil. But this is related to the life of the field; the field is related to the neighborhood; and step by step he is led outward to take in continent, earth, universe.

Moreover, he is driven to bring more and more scientific disciplines to bear on his effort to understand the communities of nature and man. Physics and chemistry are involved, of course; likewise meteorology, geology, biology in all its branches; but if he includes enough area in the search, he is compelled at last to bring in anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics and history. How otherwise understand why the world is what it is today? Few things, if any, indeed, are irrelevant. Monetary policy, credit, instalment buying, advertising, sex and marriage, the development of language, war, education—all these and many more play a powerful part in shaping the communities of the earth. And Paul Sears literally includes them all in "This Is Our World." The book is an attempt, in 304 pages, to make plain to the average citizen "the realities of man and his environment," beginning with earth, air, water, and moving on up to modern civilization, with all its complexities, dangers, horrors and hopes.

In other words, Paul Sears has become a specialist in the general. Few scientists would make such an attempt. Experts in various fields will hasten to tell you that he oversimplifies complex problems. So he does. But superficial he is not. Again and again, in handling diverse subjects—which he does with an air of judiciousness, firmness and certainty—he puts his finger on the right spot. He has a penetrating intelligence and an admirable calmness.

Admittedly he invades fields that have been worked by better men, specialists in their turn. But his concern is with the synthesis, and in this he has two things to contribute of his own. First, a profound sense—and he succeeds in conveying it—that man is inseparable from nature; that our whole boasted civilization, based on science as it supposedly is, violently upsets the balance of nature, and that unless we mend our ways we face certain retribution, not for any mystical reasons, but simply because we are compelled to live on and with the earth; second, an excellent clarity and simplicity of expression that will illuminate many things for that average citizen to whom he addresses himself.

At the end he throws the burden of the solution of our problems on the creative artist, whom he begs to "leave his preoccupation with the episodic, the trivial and the transitory [and] see that he should be about the building of a great and lasting culture. . . . He most assuredly can point the way, and a grateful people will follow in his wake." This begs more questions than it solves. No matter. We could do with a few more men who have as much breadth of vision as Paul Sears shows in this book.

GOVE HAMBIDGE.

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JOHN CHAMBERLAIN says in The Nation:

"The virtue of the Raushenbushes resides in their cantankerous, obstinate, mulish insistence upon analyzing the tacit assumptions that underlie most of the IFS. They start with no *parti pris* for "isolationism" or "internationalism," the two polar abstractions that tend to shut off rational discussion.

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Mallarmé Englished

Some Poems of Mallarmé, translated by Roger Fry, with Commentaries by Charles Mauron. New York: The Oxford University Press. 320 pages. $3.

IT APPEARS that the late Roger Fry, the great exponent of modern painting, carried Mallarmé's poems around for years and left a partial translation of them and an unfinished study of Mallarmé. Both have now been brought out in this volume, together with an essay and a commentary by a French friend of Roger Fry's, M. Charles Mauron. Fry's translations are not very remarkable: he was not himself enough of a poet. But the commentary of M. Mauron provides the best guide to Mallarmé's poetry which, so far as I know, has ever been published. M. Mauron attempts to analyze the delicate series of variations which Mallarmé played on the theme of his dilemma between "crude reality" and "grudging silence," "daily life and nothing." For there was possible for him, according to M. Mauron, only actuality or the negation of actuality; yet Mallarmé was unable to live in either, and found himself compelled to spend his esthetic life, like his Faun, day-dreaming of nymphs, with images that were always being driven at one pole into the banalities of ordinary existence or at the other into the sterility of the unapplied intellect. M. Mauron's explanations of the more obscure of Mallarmé's poems are sometimes curious but always quite plausible. EDMUND WILSON.

More News from Tartary

Forbidden Journey: From Peking to Kashmir, by Ella K. Maillart. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 320 pages, illustrated. $3.

ACCOMPANIED by Peter Fleming, Ella Maillart made a tough march from Peking to Kashmir mainly to discover what was happening in Sinkiang (Chinese Turkestan). Fleming's exciting and witty description of their journey was spoilt only by an irritating tendency to confuse the wilds of Turkestan with the playing-fields of Eton—a fault not shared by Miss Maillart, who writes with less facility but with greater interest in the people they met along the way. Her views on the political and military situations in Sinkiang form a meaty center to her book, and are doubly important in view of the fact that Sinkiang holds a highly strategic position in the Asiatic policies of China, Japan, Great Britain and Soviet Russia, and is virtually closed to news-hawks.

Sinkiang is split into two factions: the North, under a governor-general from Nanking, and the South, a rebel party of Chinese Moslems—the Tungans. This is more than a simple religious-political split for, while the North party officially represents Nanking, the Tungans argue that they themselves have greater right to this claim because growing Soviet economic and political influence has reduced the North regime to mere puppet status. (It is even rumored that Sinkiang will secede from China and demand admission into the USSR; a move Miss Maillart considers highly probable). After years of fighting, the civil war has reached a stalemate on account of the absence of the Tungan leader, Ma Chung-yin, a general whose recent actions have mystified everybody. For after the Northern armies, with the assistance of Russian planes and infantry, defeated him in 1934, Ma took the remarkable step of going over into Soviet Russia himself! Why he did so, whether he is alive, no one seems able to say, but certainly his forces are helpless without him. As Miss Maillart says:

> As long as Ma is away from Sinkiang things may remain relatively peaceful. And for the moment this is undoubtedly what the Soviets want so that the country may rise from its ruins. Ma is like a pawn held in reserve for the Asiatic chessboard. Having the leader of the Tungans in their hands, the Russians control the south of Sinkiang. If Sheng Shih-tsai (the Northern military governor) grew less docile they could unloose the Tungans on him, with Ma at their head.

For the British in Northern India and Tibet this is little more than an economically unwelcome situation. But for Japan it may prove most consequential should her militarists attempt to push their drive westward along the Soviet frontier. RICHARD VAUGHAN.

A Time to Dance

First Person Plural, by Angna Enters. New York: Stackpole Sons. 386 pages. $4.

THIS IS a book that gives pleasure and is not personal: it is not a dancer's autobiography. It is not an autobiography at all, but a series of impressions, diary notes, descriptions of places, scenes and dances, lacking intimate background and the cloying egoism usually found in dancers' writing. And it is not by a dancer: Angna Enters has said of her art of mime:

> My feeling was that mime best expressed those images characteristic of human physical movement and expression in the waking and dream states; those nuances of sensation, manners and mannerisms, languors, intonations of expression—the list is endless—which change their form when crystallized in poetry and drama.

She insists that the description of mime must be in its own terms, but goes on to describe her "episodes," their origins and meanings, the costumes she has made for them —in a tone which implies that each episode creates an age before you. The tone becomes pretentious, set against the minute and often flimsy productions. But the book has not these qualities. More and more clearly, through an itinerary of nervous travel which is the book's backbone, the personality of the woman emerges; until, at the end, it is a work built on a modern personality, a subtle and live recorder.

It is a journal without affectation, with no parade of private living. Speaking of it, one acknowledges the continual sense of the dancer writing, as a graceful and gifted person whose contacts made her realize that everywhere and in all times art is the expression closest to natural life (of the Propylaea, "the forms have a human warmth which makes the term 'coldly classical' meaningless"). Expression of life in gesture sent Angna Enters to mime rather than the more formal dance; and expression of life sent her finally to write this book she never intended. She knows Spain well, and has visited it regularly, at yearlong intervals, since 1929. The country becomes more vivid in her writing with each return, richer in color and music, until the war strikes while she is in Malaga. She sees the first meaning and destruction, is evacuated, broadcasts from her ship, makes her new Spanish episodes and writes this book. You are in the crisis of this story from the beginning; Europe prepares you, and from the second page she says: "That tragedy somehow has given me a voice. It has caused me to realize that art alone, like bread, is not enough for life. . . ."

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See 'The Washington Front' by C. A. Hathaway on Page 5

See "A Political Comeback in Reverse" Edit. on Page 6

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Contributors

JONATHAN MITCHELL, who is well known to New Republic readers for his many articles on politics and current affairs, lives in Washington, D. C.

EDMUND WILSON'S forthcoming book, "The Triple Thinkers," a collection of essays, is scheduled for publication on March 17 by Harcourt, Brace.

HASSOLDT DAVIS, who has contributed regularly to The Saturday Review of Literature, The Atlantic Monthly, Scribner's and Story, is at work on a novel about the South Seas.

KENNETH BURKE is the author of several books, including "Permanence and Change" and "Attitudes Toward History," both published in The New Republic Dollar Series.

GOVE HAMBIDGE is principal research writer for the United States Department of Agriculture, author of "Time to Live," "Enchanted Acre," "Your Meals and Your Money" and editor of several of the most recent Yearbooks of Agriculture.

RICHARD VAUGHAN is a young Englishman who has written and translated for a living both at home and in this country, where he is now living.

MURIEL RUKEYSER was formerly dance editor of New Theatre. She is the author of a book of poems, "Theory of Flight," and a poem "Mediterranean," published in pamphlet form by the Medical Bureau to Aid Spanish Democracy. A new volume of poetry, "US1," is scheduled for publication this month by Covici, Friede.

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